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## Makerere University's Friends and Development Partners

### **A Friend in Need**

If there is such a thing as luck, I have good reasons to believe that good old Makerere had plenty of it. During more than seven decades of its existence as an institution of higher learning, Makerere has been fortunate to attract scores of loyal friends, supporters and well-wishers – individuals and organisations. No doubt, their unwavering support has been its enduring strength. During its darkest chapter in the 1970s and early 1980s, many of its old supporters abandoned it, not so much by choice, but because the prevailing circumstances had made it impossible to continue supporting the institution. As soon as some semblance of peace and political stability returned to the country, one by one, they returned to pick up the pieces.

As Professor David Rubadiri (that famous son of Makerere and the former Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi) once put it, when he visited his old alma mater with his College Principals, Deans, university officials and student leaders in 2001, “During the days of the worst political turmoil Ugandans had been subjected to, the forces of intellectual darkness did everything possible to kill Makerere, but Makerere refused to die.” I believe David Rubadiri summed it up very well. Indeed, Makerere refused to die, because within the dwindling rank and file of its fine academics and seasoned administrators, there were still a few extremely devoted and loyal staff left. They ensured that their beloved institution did not die with Uganda's turbulent times. It was badly bruised, but refused to go under. In those times of greatest need, it still had many loyal friends outside its gates, who directly or indirectly lent a helping hand. Those are the ones that provided the intellectual anchor upon which it buttressed its survival.

As its eighth Vice Chancellor, I had the rare privilege of enjoying their generosity first hand. They put their confidence in me, and they did so unreservedly; for that, I feel duty bound to devote part of this personal account to them. Makerere's impressive list of loyal friends is almost inexhaustible, and I am the first to admit that it is next-to-impossible to pay appropriate homage to all of them, because they are many! However, a few stand out prominently, notably because of their exceptional generosity and loyalty to the institution. I have already referred to most of them elsewhere in this account. Where I have mentioned them, it was not so much a deliberate gesture of paying them the homage which they surely deserve, but an illustration of what we were able to achieve with their generous support. The order in which I am listing them here has little do with how much or how long they have supported Makerere. As far as I am concerned, they are all equal among equals.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and its Evergreen Friendship**



**Plate 21:** On his first visit to Uganda in October 1998, Dr Gordon Conway, President of the Rockefeller Foundation met with HE Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda at State House, Nakasero. From Left: Dr Gordon Conway, HE Yoweri Museveni and the author, Prof. John Ssebuwufu

According to the available records, the association between the Rockefeller Foundation and Makerere dates back to 1961, a year before Uganda attained independence from Britain. That year, the Foundation made a grant amounting to 50,000 British Pounds Sterling to the college to support bilharzia research under the auspices of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It also began a long-term cooperative programme of assistance to institutions of higher education in East Africa. Apart from the turbulent years, the relationship has kept growing. In the decade 1961 – 1971, sometimes referred to as Makerere's golden decade in which the Foundation played a key supportive role, the college evolved from a relatively small institution of higher learning into a vibrant university serving the needs of Uganda and East Africa. The Foundation's significant contribution to the college's evolutionary process was in four major disciplines, namely Agriculture, Medicine, Arts and Humanities, and Social Sciences. In each of the four disciplines, the Foundation assisted the college in four key and specific areas. Firstly, it provided support for research aimed at increasing the body of knowledge on the East African environment and problems, which would later become the basis for adapting the teaching materials to the African conditions. Secondly, it assisted the college to strengthen and improve its capacity for data collection and analysis for policy choices relevant to national development. This was also the time regional cooperation in East Africa, underpinned by the East African Treaty and Community, was at its peak. Makerere was actively engaged in activities aimed at preserving and strengthening regional dialogue and interaction among East African scholars through the Educational Councils in Medical, Agricultural and Social Sciences, which were operating under the University of East Africa, incorporating the colleges at Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The Foundation provided the bulk of the money which funded most of these activities. Thirdly, staff development was where the Foundations contribution made the most impact. In fact, most of the great names among the first generation of East African scholars began their academic careers under the Staff Development Programme of the University of East Africa in which the Rockefeller Foundation made a preponderant contribution through scholarships, fellowships or advanced professional training in universities or research institutes abroad for promising African academics. Lastly, the Foundation funded a Special Lectureship and Tutorial Fellowships scheme, which was aimed at ensuring that there would be no financial obstacles to an orderly transition to the Africanisation of the University of East Africa and its constituent colleges. Under this scheme, Makerere University College was assisted to appoint suitably qualified Ugandans as Special Lecturers, Tutorial Fellows and Special Assistants, pending a vacancy on the regular establishment. The Foundation also assisted Makerere in the provision and sponsoring of expatriate staff. Through this assistance, the college was able to recruit expatriate staff to fill vacant positions where staffing was poor. At Makerere, the Faculties of Agriculture and Social Sciences were the largest beneficiaries of the Foundation's Special and Expatriate Lecturer schemes.

In the period 1971 – 1981, the association between Makerere University and the Foundation declined for reasons already explained. This was the period when research and postgraduate training declined, and the university stopped registering any form of serious development. However, after the liberation war in 1979, the Rockefeller Foundation came back and was at the forefront in the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the ravaged university. In fact, the Foundation co-hosted the first Donors' Conference, which was held at its premises in Bellagio, Italy in 1981, and during which Makerere connected again and entered into very useful dialogue with the donor community. At about the same time, the Foundation on its own resumed its support to the university in its traditional areas of Health, Agriculture and Social Sciences. For instance, in 1987, the Foundation made what was then a substantial grant of US\$160,000 towards the university's Staff Development Programme. The first beneficiaries of this grant were two doctoral students, namely Boniface Makanga of Zoology and Gabriel Bimenya of Biochemistry, who were assisted to go to the UK for research training for about six months. At about the same time, seven first-degree holders in the Departments of Veterinary Public Health, Paediatrics, Geography, Chemistry and Botany, as well as the Institutes of Computer Science and Public Health respectively, were also assisted to go abroad for training at Ohio State University and the University of Toledo in the USA, Universities of Manchester, Leeds, Glasgow and Reading in the UK and at the University of Zimbabwe, for their Masters degrees. The Rockefeller Foundation's contribution to the university's Staff Development Programme was adding the badly needed stock to the university's academic staff, which at the time stood at less than 50% of its full strength.

It also made a grant of US\$65,000 to Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) under the leadership of late Dan Mudoola as Director, to support a research project on "The Agrarian Question and Technological Change". In the field of health, the Foundation provided funding for research in Clinical Epidemiology, which enabled eight members of staff of the Faculty of Medicine to receive specialised training in this field. This assisted them to gain sufficient competence to conduct their research projects. At the time, advanced training in Clinical Epidemiology was not available at Makerere. It had to be done abroad. A number of staff also supported by the Foundation went to Canada and the USA for their training. The School of Fine Art was not forgotten too. The Foundation made a modest grant to the School to purchase badly needed materials, while also supporting a research project on Contemporary Art in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda undertaken by young Artists at the School.

Some of the buildings at Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute, Kabanyolo, including a postgraduate hostel, are testimony to the Rockefeller Foundation's generosity since it started associating with Makerere. In addition, the

Banana Research Projects at Makerere University Research Institute, Kabanyolo and Kawanda Research Institute have equally enjoyed generous funding from the Foundation. The two projects were the first serious research effort on the unique East African highland bananas, which constitute Uganda's favourite staple – *matooke*". Part of the Banana grant was used to setup three state-of-the-art Biotechnology laboratories at Kabanyolo, Kawanda and at the Faculty of Agriculture on the university's main campus.

Professor Patrick Rubaihayo's Biotechnology research laboratory in Department of Crop Science is one of the most modern of such laboratories in the country and a showcase of plant "hi-tech" research. As Vice Chancellor, I took a lot of pride in this facility. The Banana Tissue Culture Laboratories at Kawanda (under NARO) and Kabanyolo were equally impressive facilities. Through this research effort funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, a new method of propagating bananas was developed, which is now fully commercialised and widely used as a source of clean planting material. The problem with the traditional method of using suckers cut straight from the mother plants as planting material was spread of disease, particularly the infamous banana weevils, which this cut-and-plant technique enabled to spread from plant to plant. Besides supporting the banana research, the Foundation funded Professor Adipala for his PhD at the Ohio State University in the USA, as well as his important cowpea research project, which culminated in a new variety of this important Ugandan vegetable being released to the farmers for the first time in more than thirty years. So, when I took over as Vice Chancellor in 1993, I found a flourishing and historical friendship between the university and the Foundation, which for me meant that I had a firm foot in the Foundation's door before I even started my job. Indeed, it marked the beginning of the incredibly generous support the Rockefeller Foundation, extended to the university throughout my almost 11 years as Vice Chancellor.

When Dr Gordon Conway, formerly Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex in the UK and a professor at Imperial College of Science and Technology, took over as President of the Foundation in the late 1990s, and I guess the first English man to lead this American organisation, Makerere was the first university outside the USA he visited. His first visit to Makerere was in October 1998, followed by two other visits, in November 2000 and March 2004. On his first visit, he was accompanied by Drs Check Mbacke and Catherine Namuddu, among other officers of the Foundation. Gordon Conway and I became friends instantly. In the course of our discussions, I decided to take him on a short tour of the campus. I remember him making an interesting comment as we went around the almost litter-free campus, on how our students managed to maintain such a level of discipline and cleanliness. I remembered a similar comment being made by the Vice Chancellor of Nottingham University when he and his wife visited the university a few years earlier. I thought that was a complimentary comment

worth remembering. As a former Vice Chancellor, Dr Gordon Conway and I had a lot in common to share. After lamenting about our thankless job, we settled down to some serious business. We explored other ways in which the Foundation could enhance support to Makerere, which he saw as a university on the mend after a difficulty period in its history. I had intended to crown his historical visit to Makerere with a tour of Professor Rubaihayo's Biotechnology Laboratory in the Faculty of Agriculture. Lo and behold, when we went there, we found the place in total darkness. Without warning, Uganda Electricity Board (UEB) had cut off the power supply as a way of forcing us to pay the outstanding bills. The specimens that were supposed to be kept at a constant  $-80^{\circ}$  C had started thawing, rendering them useless. A year's work and hundreds of thousands of dollars of donor money lay in ruin. I was deeply mortified, to say the least. To put it mildly, the visit to Professor Rubaihayo's laboratory was simply a disaster. At the time, we did not even have a standby generator to take care of such emergencies.

What made this particular episode so painful was the fact that I had talked to the then UEB Distribution Manager, who happened to be a friend of my family and he had assured me that although we had a bill to pay, he would not cut off the power. I had explained to him that we were waiting for the Ministry of Finance to release the funds to settle the outstanding bill, after all Makerere was one of UEB's biggest customers. As it turned out, the trust I had put in my friend was misplaced. He went back on his promise and instructed his men to cut the power. It was a bitter experience. In fact, throughout my tenure as Vice Chancellor, I found dealing with the utility companies a constant headache. In spite of the fact that Makerere University was a public institution funded by the same Government which owned them and the fact that the university had never defaulted on the payments, the UEB and National Water and Sewerage Corporation never stopped harassing us for bills. The water company had even hired a private debt collecting company which, more often than not, behaved no better than a bunch of mercenaries, with little regard for corporate relationship management. They were fully aware of our vulnerability and took full advantage of it. One day when I inquired why they were doing this to us, someone told me that a fat cheque from Makerere always went a long way to solve their problems, so they always eagerly looked forward to it. Indeed, our bills ran into hundreds of millions of shillings. I had learnt the lesson. Besides the private talks with me and the University Administration and a tour of the facilities funded by the Foundation at the time, Dr Conway was scheduled to deliver a public lecture in the Main Hall. He had intended to present it in power point, but power was a problem. We had to improvise with a small and noisy generator. I do not even remember where it came from. It worked, but the noise almost drowned his voice; I cursed my friend, I cursed the entire UEB establishment, but my curses had no effect, the damage had already been done.

As I have pointed out before, the Rockefeller Foundation had contributed significantly and in many ways to agricultural research in Uganda over the years, starting from the 1960s, so we thought that on his first visit to the country, it was only prudent that the President of Uganda should know about our important guest and to fill him in on the important contribution the Rockefeller had made to improve Uganda's agriculture. I therefore, made an appointment for Dr Gordon Conway to meet President Museveni. Fortunately, the State House accepted our request and fixed us in the President's busy schedule. Dr Conway had a string of important discoveries to his credit as an agricultural research scientist. Among other things, he was promoting a new high yielding variety of rice in West Africa, developed out of the research done in Sierra Leone. It was the kind of stuff I thought would fascinate the President. Although we had to wait for a long while before we were ushered in, the two men had what I thought was an interesting discussion which, if my memory serves me right, soon drifted to bananas and banana research.

Although the President was happy with all the agronomical research done on this important food crop over the years, much of it funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, he was concerned that there was still a missing link in the chain, something not yet done. Banana production had gone up, but the farmers were experiencing difficulty in selling all their *matooke* because of its perishable nature; yet according to President Museveni, no scientist in Uganda was conducting serious research on alternative ways of utilising the fruit beyond eating it cooked. He was keenly interested in value addition research. It was a thought-provoking idea which I have reason to believe led to a tripartite initiative involving the Department of Food Science and Technology at Makerere, the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and the International Institute of Agriculture, working together to improve banana marketing, including its export and non- traditional utilisation. It was a productive meeting which ended on a good note. By the time Dr Conway took over as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr David Court, who had been in charge of the Foundation's regional office in Nairobi for many years, had joined the World Bank. He had been replaced as Director by a Senegalese national going by the name of Dr Cheick Mbacke. Catherine Namuddu, a Ugandan, had been working with the Foundation in Nairobi as a consultant after leaving ITEK in the late 1980s. After the departure of Dr Conway, the two officers together with Dr Joyce Mook, the Foundation's Associate Vice-President, worked closely with me to implement I@mak.com – one of most important and ambitious programmes that the Rockefeller Foundation had ever funded at Makerere.

As a further contribution to the university's development in the recent years, the Rockefeller Foundation, through its African Career Awards Programme, supported several members of staff to study for their doctoral degrees and theses

research. It also provided some with postdoctoral research fellowships. Dr George Nasimanya of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was one of the recipients of this award, while he was studying for his PhD at the University of Guelph in Canada. Starting in October 1995, the Foundation provided significant financial support to the Institute of Public Health to launch a new and popular two-year field oriented Master of Public Health (MPH), under a new concept of Public Health Schools Without Walls (PHSW). By October 2003, the institute had received over one million US dollars from the Foundation towards the costs related to this programme.

As we embarked on some major university-wide reforms, in 1995 the Foundation provided funding towards the development of the University Strategic Plan, which was a critical instrument in the university's transformation process. It also provided funding for the Maxplan planning process that led to the formulation of a blueprint for transforming the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences. A similar planning process, which the Foundation also funded, produced the blueprint for re-organising and rationalising the Faculties of Agriculture; Forestry and Nature Conservation; the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Zoology (Fisheries Unit) into a College of Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Environmental Science. This was in addition to the small research grants it was awarding to members of staff, particularly in the Faculty of Agriculture, from time to time.

In fact, it is impossible to do full justice to the Rockefeller Foundation's contribution to Makerere University in these few pages. Suffice it to point out that during my time, the Faculty of Agriculture, the Institute of Public Health and the Institute of Social Research were the big recipients of the Foundation's support. It is also interesting to note that in more than 25 years, the Faculty of Technology had never benefited directly from the Rockefeller Foundation. However, in November 2003, Dr Moses Musazi of the Department of Electrical Engineering received a grant to support the development of a machine capable of producing affordable sanitary pads from local materials for poor adolescent schoolgirls, under the faculty's Appropriate Technology Programme. However, as far as the big contribution goes and as far as I am concerned, the I@mak.com programme was the big gem in the crown.

### **I@mak.com, Rockefeller Foundation's Largest Grant Ever to Makerere University – Lessons in Learning to Work with the World Bank**

In 1995, the Government of Uganda initiated a fundamental reform in the way the country was governed and administered. Hitherto, administration was over-concentrated at the centre, which in turn meant that the Central Government had the monopoly over every decision and service in the country. It was an inefficient

system that kept local people out of the process of making critical decisions which affected their lives and livelihoods. The centre decided virtually everything for the people, which in effect made the citizens passive consumers of Government decisions. What made matters worse was the fact that most important Government offices were located in Kampala, the country's capital. After careful consideration, the Government decided to devolve most of its functions and much of the decision-making power to the Local Governments democratically elected by the people. The process culminated in the enactment of the Decentralisation Act, which Parliament passed into Law in 1997. As a result, the entire Government machinery had to be re-engineered. The districts became the centrepiece of the new governance structure. The centre retained only a few functions and services, such as defence, international and foreign affairs, among others. With most of the essential services like health, primary education, agriculture and feeder roads decentralised to the districts, the quality and capacity of the district staff, who were expected to implement and provide the decentralised services, became an issue. A quick survey indicated that most districts did not have enough staff with the requisite technical and administrative skills to deliver quality services. At the same time the civil servants, who were originally working at the centre were too few to go round every district, which were over 56. Moreover, the centre too needed most of its highly skilled staff to play the oversight role and to keep the non-decentralised services running efficiently. The retrenchment exercise of the 1990s, which was part of the civil service reform, had reduced their numbers drastically, leaving the central Government with just a few civil servants.

To ensure that the decentralisation process succeeded and Local Governments delivered, the Government created a separate Decentralisation Secretariat within the Ministry of Local Government to implement and coordinate the process. No doubt, the decentralisation process began with too many uncertainties. Some people were of the opinion that the Government had rushed the process and done too many wrong things in haste before building sufficient capacity in the districts. On the other hand, the long serving Minister of Local Government and main architect of decentralisation in Uganda, Jaberu Bidandi Ssali and his colleagues in the cabinet, held the contrary view. For him, it was far better to get the process going and build capacity along the way than to wait. It was really a question of the chicken and the egg. In fact, some of the reservations, which had been expressed about the weak and inadequate human capital at most districts headquarters to manage the new roles that came with the decentralisation, were real. For instance, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning and Secretary to the Treasury, Mr Emanuel Tumusiime, wanted to be sure that the finance staff had the requisite qualifications, skills and experience to manage and account for the Government grants – both the conditional and the non-conditional – which the Ministry of Finance was releasing to the districts every month.

The Decentralisation Act made all decentralised districts accounting centres. This new role placed a heavy and serious responsibility on the staff working in the District Finance Departments. In anticipation of such problems, the Government had successfully negotiated a loan from the World Bank to support the Local Government Development Programme (LGDP). One component in the LGDP was district staff development and training. In order to undertake human resources development on such a scale, the LGDP needed supplementation from local training institutions. As we have seen, Makerere University had played a key role in the planning and formulation of the decentralisation form of governance, but was not playing an active role in the programme any more beyond turning out graduates from its regular programmes, who ended up working in the Local Governments. Even if members of staff were willing to participate in the implementation of the new form of governance, decentralised governance presented the university with a real challenge. The university had no ready-made or off-the-shelf courses on decentralisation, because up to then there had never been the need or demand for them. Now that the country had embraced this form of governance, it was time for the university to get actively involved once again. Innovative and tailor-made programmes had to be designed to match the needs and demands that came with decentralisation. However, there was still an unanswered question. Where would the money to finance a mass-training programme come from? Apparently, neither the Ministry of Local Government nor the LGDP had the money to finance it. For the answer, we turned to our long trusted friend, the Rockefeller Foundation.

After several discussions between the Decentralisation Secretariat, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Rockefeller Foundation office in Nairobi, Makerere Institute of Social Research and my office, the Foundation approved a small grant to the university to undertake a situational analysis and a baseline survey in a few, but representative districts. The results of this primary research would later inform critical decision making. Delius Asiimwe, an MISR research fellow led the team that undertook the study and wrote an interesting report entitled, "Human Resources Demand from the Perspectives of the Districts-2000". The study revealed serious skill shortages in the districts; and even where the requisite skills existed, staff lacked practical experience or proper academic qualifications. Among the districts surveyed, almost 60 per cent of the staff had no university degrees, yet they were performing tasks that would ordinarily be performed by university graduates. According to the report, the District Chief Administrative Officers (or CAO) who were the topmost civil servants in the districts, had the challenge of producing high quality reports, which were a mandatory requirement to be filed to Central Government, with this kind of staff. The problem of staff quality was a complex one. Many districts could not afford to employ graduates for lack of money. Secondly, most university graduates were unwilling to work in remote rural areas, which offered very little economic

benefits and limited prospects for career and professional growth. In fact, many university graduates had the perception that working in the underdeveloped rural districts was equivalent to being thrown into academic limbo, totally cut off from the modern amenities like e-mail and the Internet. In a way, they could be excused for thinking that way for the simple reason that the university education they had received from Makerere and other universities did little to prepare them adequately for rural life. Perhaps, it inadvertently prepared them for urban life. They preferred to work in Kampala and other big urban centres which would offer them better opportunities. Under the decentralised governance, the Central Government as an employer had shrunk. Most of the civil service jobs were now in the districts. Every time you opened a newspaper, you were bound to come across advertisements spread over several pages for vacancies in this or that district administration. The central Government was hardly advertising. The answer to this was to devise an intervention programme that would assist the academic staff to adjust to the new changes and realities in order to produce graduates with the right orientation, prepared and sufficiently equipped to work and to integrate in the remote rural communities, areas that were far from the big urban centres like Kampala. The intervention was the Capacity Building for the Decentralised Districts programme, financially supported by the Government of Uganda, the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank. The programme opened a unique window of opportunity for both staff and students to discover the missing link between the university and the community. Through this programme, staff and students soon discovered that they could assist the community, particularly the rural communities, to solve their problems in a practical way and enjoy the sheer fun that came with engaging with the community.

The MISR primary report highlighted several staffing problems the decentralised districts were facing. They ranged from quality of staff to inadequate staff numbers and capacity to deliver services. As an immediate outcome, in 2000 the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to provide a seed grant to the university to develop a proposal for a much bigger grant that would fund an innovative Capacity Building for Decentralisation programme for the next three years. The university planned to implement the programme in conjunction with the Government. The aim was to consolidate and ensure the success of the decentralisation process. These efforts culminated in the formation of a Committee of 14 people to plan and implement this novel collaborative initiative between Government and Makerere University. Interestingly, this was the first time Makerere University had joined hands with the Government and worked mutually together on a programme of significant national importance. The Committee of Fourteen, later simply referred to as the C14, consisted of seven members representing the Government of Uganda and an equal number from Makerere University. Keith Muhakanizi and Kenneth Mugambe represented the Permanent Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Swamiri Katunguka initially

came in on behalf of the Decentralisation Secretariat, Yeko Acato and Fagil Mandy represented the Ministry of Education, Christopher Kiwanuka Musisi represented the Local Council V and Gloria Kempaka (later Mrs Mugambe) came from the Economic Policy Research Centre, an autonomous Government research centre based at Makerere. Nelson Sewankambo, Dean of Medicine; Elly Sabiiti, Dean of Agriculture; John C. Sekamwa, Dean of Education; Joe Oloka Onyango, Dean of Law; Joy Kwesiga, Dean of Social Sciences; Nakanyike Musisi, Director of MISR and Muhammed Kibirige Mayanja, Director of Planning and Development, made up the original Makerere's representation on the C14. The priority areas for the programme's focus as identified in the MISR report determined the choice of the university's representatives on the Committee. The MISR report listed six broad priority areas where capacity building was most urgent, namely: Agriculture; Health; Planning; Education; Governance; Financial and General Management.

Although the Vice Chancellor was the substantive chair of the Committee, I had decided to delegate the responsibility to the Academic Registrar. When the Academic Registrar ran into some difficulties, I passed the responsibility to the Director of Planning and Development, Kibirige Mayanja, to chair the Committee on my behalf. However, during the general elections in 2001, Kibirige Mayanja decided to run as candidate for President of Uganda. He resigned from the university and the Committee, but not before he had stirred up controversy in Arua town where he had led a team of C14 members to assess the capacity building needs of the relatively young district of Arua. While participating in the Juma (Friday) prayers in a mosque, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) also a Muslim, accused him of using the occasion to conduct a political campaign in a manner that was likely to cause a breach of peace in the area. The RDC almost threw the team out of town before they had completed the mission.

Understandably, this was the time of heightened political tension in the country. Fortunately, common sense prevailed and the team was able to complete its mission. Florence Nakayiwa, also from the Department of Planning and Development, replaced him. I must say that the Committee of 14 laid much of the groundwork for what would later become a showcase of a successful Government-University joint initiative. As Professor Kajubi would probably have put it, "the town and gown were finally together for a common purpose, national good". When Kibirige Mayanja left to try his luck second time at politics, some members of the Committee thought it was time for the Vice Chancellor to take over the chair and get fully involved. They believed that the Vice Chancellor would move the process forward faster. I agreed.

Cole Dodge was no stranger to Uganda and was a familiar figure to many Ugandans, especially those who had close ties with UNICEF and its country programmes in the 1980s when the guerrilla wars were raging. He was the

UNICEF Director in Uganda in those very difficult years. After retiring from UNICEF, visiting MISR as a guest scholar had become one of his pursuits. Although he lived in Nairobi at the time, he had become a regular visitor at MISR. He knew the country very well and his background, long experience and ability to facilitate meetings and events stood him in good stead for his next assignment. A combination of these attributes came in handy when the Rockefeller Foundation agreed to engage him as a facilitator on behalf of the C14. He was really an asset to the committee, especially during the shaky beginning. He helped minimise the usual mistrust between the university members of the Committee and the Government representatives. Some Government representatives on the committee had started expressing the usual doubts and scepticism about Makerere's ability to do anything useful or innovative. As far as some of them were concerned, Makerere was a place where students were taught only theoretical and abstract ideas. The scepticism was a reflection of an old and persistent perception that nothing of practical good could ever come out of Makerere. Some even expressed doubt whether Makerere staff had the capacity to utilise the colossal sums of money the Rockefeller Foundation was about to invest in the programme.

For a while, I feared that two sides could never work together. The Committee appeared to be in imminent danger of falling apart. In my rather naïve way, I never stopped reminding the doubting members of the C14 of my long held opinion that Makerere had some of the country's finest brains amongst its staff, therefore Makerere had the capacity to deliver on any programme, whether theoretical or hands-on. All staff needed was to be challenged and facilitated, the rest would fall in place automatically. The message seemed to sink in and with a lot of hard work the Committee was ready to commence serious work. Later Cole Dodge, while commenting on how the programme had fared so far, said that while most members of the Committee feared that the programme would not achieve its objectives, only the Vice Chancellor had faith in his staff's ability to deliver. Perhaps it was blind faith I had in my staff. At first it was just faith, but later I was totally vindicated when the majority of the university staff who participated in the programme performed far beyond expectation. They proved the sceptics wrong.

Towards the end of 2000, the Committee of 14 spent much of the time planning and laying down ground rules. Occasionally, Joyce Mook, Cheick Mbacke and Catherine Namuddu would fly in to check on our progress and to make sure that things got off to a good start and problems were promptly resolved. On several occasions, they also participated fully in the Committee's work. Windsor Lake Victoria Hotel at Entebbe, one of the oldest hotels built in the colonial times, offered an excellent venue for our weekend meetings at competitive room charges. We used to check in on Friday evening and would work up to Sunday at lunchtime. Due to the enormity of the work at the beginning,

we worked almost every weekend, but later we devised a proper work schedule. One of the first tasks was to draft the ground rules, regulations and procedures for the I@mak.com programme. This was tough; and as we had nothing to refer to, we had to start everything from scratch. It was a totally new experience with no precedence. It was hard but exciting work. Initially we had not realised the need for the Committee to have its own secretariat; so hitherto, Dr Nakanyike Musisi was handling all Committee's work at MISR.

As work intensified and the documents began to accumulate, the need for a separate secretariat became obvious. The Committee decided to create a Secretariat, with Nakanyike Musisi as a part-time Executive Secretary. She was joined by Samwiri Katunguka, who became the Task Manager for the World Bank Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL); Florence Nakayiwa, as Administrator; Cole Dodge, as External Facilitator and Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, as Finance Manager; with Andrew Asiimwe and Maureen Nabwaami as Assistant Accountant and Assistant Administrator respectively. A Secretary and a cleaner constituted the rest of the Secretariat. For a home, Professor Epelu Opio, in charge of housing, agreed to allocate Flat C5 in Lincoln House to the I@mak.com Secretariat. It soon became one of the most well-known addresses in the university. One of the implications of having a secretariat was that Nakanyike Musisi, Samwiri Katunguka and Florence Nakayiwa ceased to be active members of the Committee. They had to be replaced with new members. Some members felt that the Committee needed an international member with experience in transforming higher education institutions. At the time, every member was a Ugandan. The proposal was carried and Dr Miriam Were, a prominent Kenyan Public Health specialist with a distinguished record of accomplishments, became the first external member of the Committee. Much later, Martin Orach Oola of the Decentralisation Secretariat and Raphael Magyezi of the Uganda Local and Urban Authorities Association (ULAA) Secretariat, joined the Committee as full members. The Committee's composition was now bigger than the original C14, which started out as a purely planning committee. In fact, as the membership increased, we had to stop calling it C14.

As we all know, good planning is a key to success. No doubt, a new initiative of this kind depended on careful prior planning to succeed. This meant that the programme had to start on a small scale as a pilot in a small number of carefully selected districts. There was no way we could roll out a new programme before we were sure it would work. It was a risk we were not prepared to take at this stage if we were to avoid disasters later. The pilot districts had to be a mix of urban and rural, some relatively well-resourced and others poorly resourced. Kampala, Mbale, Rakai, Arua, Iganga and Mbarara districts were selected for the pilot phase. However, given the rate at which the Uganda Parliament was creating new districts at the time, moreover most of them carved out of the old ones,

the number of districts in the pilot phase kept increasing. Sironko, which was originally part of Mbale District, was now a separate district. Also Yumbe, carved out of Arua District and Rwampara county, originally in Mbarara District, but later transferred to the new district of Ntungamo, had to be accommodated in the pilot sample. Using the MISR primary research as guide, the Committee identified the critical areas that required capacity building and in-depth intervention. Next, we had to devise a good strategy to assist the university staff to be able to respond to the challenge of assisting the districts with the appropriate capacity building interventions. Our catchword was "innovation". Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Cole Dodge suggested that to reflect and stress the importance of innovation in the programme, the Committee should adopt the more captivating name: Innovations at Makerere Committee (or I@mak.com, for short) as its official name. The Committee unanimously accepted the new name.

The first task was to produce a set of well packaged guidelines, bound in a well-designed and attractive booklet, explaining the goal and objectives of the programme, what members of staff were expected to do, how to apply for project funding from I@mak.com and above all the programme justification. The next stage was to sell the programme to the university staff. For that, we needed some good publicity. The strategy we adopted was as innovative as was the programme itself. We decided that the best way to catch everybody's attention was to invite all academic and administrative staff, officials of the pilot districts and the Rockefeller to a one-day briefing meeting at the Kampala International Conference Centre on February 17, 2001, with all expenses paid by the Committee. At registration, each participant received a well-designed bag containing the guidelines and other documents and a small out-of-pocket stipend.

Given the level of apathy at the time, we had estimated a less than fifty per cent turn up, because we knew that most Makerere staff members were not keen on attending meetings, moreover during a weekend. Little did we know that we were in for a shock. Over ninety percent of the university staff turned up for the meeting. To say that the crowd overwhelmed us would be an understatement. Indeed, history was made that day. Good preparatory work had done the trick. This was the first time members of staff had been mobilised this way. We had gone to great length to ensure the meeting succeeded and achieved its objectives. We prepared well and the presentations were lucid and up to the point. The organisation went like clockwork, with no hitches, no glitches. At each presentation, members of staff raised questions and comments, which were exhaustively discussed. We did not want to leave any stone unturned. In the course of the discussion, some members of staff expressed fear that the I@mak.com programme would turn the university into some sort of a polytechnic. Others were concerned with issues of sustainability beyond donor funding. We explained that in addition to its innovativeness and relevancy to the capacity

building for decentralisation, all project proposals submitted to the Committee for funding had to spell out how the project would be sustained after the end of I@mak.com funding. That was a critical element in the proposal. The proposal writers had to state clearly how they intended to sustain their programmes and projects. It was one of the key conditions for any proposal to be accepted for funding. After this “Kacoke Madit”, (the Luo words for big meeting) and all fears allayed, the Capacity Building Programme for the decentralised districts was officially launched.

At the February meeting we had made it clear that Makerere University staff was the main programme implementers and the I@mak.com was the programme’s grant awarding body, so the guidelines we developed to help the proposal writers were quite elaborate. The grants had to be competed for with staff having to write high quality proposals in order to get the funds through a competitive process. To ensure institutional ownership of the programme, it was a mandatory requirement that all applications for funding were routed through the Heads of Departments and Deans in accordance to the normal university proposal approval process. The reason for this condition was two-fold. One was to ensure that the applicant’s department and faculty had a stake in the programme implementation, and not necessarily an isolated individual’s project.

Secondly, it also ensured proper fund utilisation and accountability according to the university approved procedures. At the beginning, the Committee was disbursing funds directly to the successful grantees. The rationale was to minimise unnecessary bureaucratic delays. However, a few bad cases of abuse and non-accountability led to a change in policy. The policy change required the University Bursar to channel the funds through the grantee’s Dean. The original programme designed focused on about seven areas: Training university staff in decentralisation; short courses tailored to specific service delivery needs for district staff; long courses for non-graduate district staff, leading to degrees in fields relevant to their work; curriculum development to make it more relevant to societal needs; decentralisation policy research; demonstrations and extension, including appropriate technology and undergraduate students internships. In addition, the programme had provision for about one hundred undergraduate scholarships in the six target disciplines. Originally, all the scholarships were tenable at Makerere, but later they were made tenable at any of the partnering institutions. There was also a provision of some seventy-five or so partial research grants for students enrolled on Masters degree programmes at Makerere or at any of the partnering institutions and twenty PhD scholarship reserved specifically for Makerere University staff. The guidelines stressed the need to put emphasis on experiential learning techniques, which gave students a deeper understanding of the dynamics of local governments under the decentralisation system of governance.

The I@mak.com programme had very specific goal, objectives and clearly stated outcomes and deliverables. Therefore, it was not only imperative that the Capacity Building Programme succeeded, but that it fulfilled all its objectives and goals before it ended. To ensure the programme's success, it was critically important to focus on quality of projects, their relevance to decentralisation and capacity development, as well as sustainability. To that end, every application for funding, with the exception of research and some demonstrations, had to go through a mandatory four-stage process. As a first step, an interested applicant had to submit a short, but concise concept note. In the note, the applicant had to detail the justification for the proposed intervention, how it related to the goal and objectives of the Capacity Building Programme, the expected outcomes and deliverables and how the project proposal's author intended to achieve them. It was laborious, but necessary. The Committee reviewed the note based on a set of criteria. Each Committee member had to make an independent assessment and award a mark. At the end of the exercise, all the individual marks were added together and a simple average worked out. Only concept notes with an average score of seventy percent or better qualified for funding for the next stage, the feasibility phase. Later, the qualifying mark was adjusted to sixty five percent. That was the kind of quality the Committee expected. During the feasibility phase, the applicant received a small grant to test his or her ideas amongst the targeted stakeholders and beneficiaries in the districts. At the end of the feasibility study, the grantee wrote a detailed report, which included among other things an evaluation report from the participants and district officials and a full accountability for the funds. Any proposal that targeted stakeholders in the districts and did not give a favourable rating stood no chance of receiving more funding from the Committee. From the Committee's point of view, this was a clear indication that intended beneficiaries did not think the idea addressed their needs. The Committee wanted Makerere staff to understand that much as they could initiate ideas, ultimately there had to be a strong demand for them in the districts and communities. For that reason, the I@mak.com process was strongly demand-driven. Many brilliant and well-written proposals failed at this stage, because there was no demonstrated demand for them. The next stage was the pilot phase. This was really the roll-out stage. The targeted audience was bigger and the scope of coverage wider. At the end of the pilot phase, the grantees wrote another comprehensive report, similar to the one for the feasibility phase, also incorporating the beneficiaries' evaluation.

At the pilot stage, the Committee expected a lot more rigour. The report had to score seventy percent and better to qualify for the fourth and final stage, which was the full implementation phase. For one reason or other, many worthy projects failed at this stage. Although at every stage, the Committee endeavoured to inform members of staff why their proposal had failed or fell within a certain range of marks. The authors could revise and re-submit them. The Committee was equally

concerned about the high failure rate. We did some detective work and zeroed the problem down to the high pass mark. Perhaps in our fervent quest for quality and excellence, we had pitched the pass mark too high. Consequently too, many good proposals were failing to make the grade to the next stage. Personally, I found it painful to turn down reports with a score of say sixty eight percent or sixty nine percent. Reading the reports as we used to do, one got a sense of the hard work staff was putting into writing them. Certainly, it was an intellectually taxing work and here we were, telling them that their best efforts were not good enough. That was bound to be a shattering experience for them. It was also becoming a serious disincentive for staff to continue submitting proposals. I figured that many proposals were failing because very few members of staff had experience in working directly with the remote rural communities or had good ideas how the decentralised Local Governments worked. Therefore, majority of staff members were wading through unfamiliar territory. Secondly, at the time I@mak.com was not the only source of funding open to them. Therefore, we had to be aware of its negative impact on the I@mak.com Programme. Staff were bound to lose morale and interest in the Programme due to our stringent requirements and without their full participation, the Programme was doomed to fail, and it would be an expensive failure. That was the risk some of us were not prepared to take.

Interestingly, some members of staff were also not prepared to give up without a fight. Every time they received a no from the Committee's Executive Secretary, who was responsible for communicating the good and the bad news, they lodged appeals; and we were duty bound as a Committee to look at the grounds for appeal. In some instances, some members of staff vented their anger and frustration on the Secretariat staff. Later after a much-heated debate, the Committee agreed to adjust the pass mark down slightly, but without compromising much on quality. To the Committee, quality was simply an obsession. Staff whose proposals made it to the fourth and final stage stood to gain up to a maximum of US\$40,000 to see their projects through full implementation. Later, other incentives were introduced to drum up more good proposals. For example, the author of every project which the panel of judges that I@mak.com had set up for that purpose considered the best, qualified for the Vice Chancellor's Award of a total sum of US\$30,000. A cheque was handed over to the winner at every graduation ceremony. At the end of the fourth stage, which was the full implementation stage, the Committee required the concerned member of staff to submit a final report detailing outputs, outcomes, impact, sustainability and how the author intended to incorporate and integrate the outcomes of his project into the regular university programmes.

Soon after the big meeting in February 2001, the Rockefeller Foundation released an additional one million dollars to I@mak.com towards year one activities. At the time, that seemed to be a lot of money. Some members of the Committee even wondered whether the university had the capacity to utilise all that money in one

year. This lack of confidence on the part of some members of the Committee led to the initial grants being excessively generous. For instance, a concept note which qualified for the feasibility phase could get as much as US\$5,000 dollars and a successful full implementation proposal could fetch US\$100,000. As the concept papers started coming in droves and were being vetted, it became clear that we had grossly underestimated the staff's capacity and interest in the programme and the challenge and opportunity it presented to them.

By April 2001, the one million dollar-grant was almost exhausted and more proposals were still coming in. It was as if we had opened a floodgate. In any event, most of the proposals the Committee had approved earlier had not yet gone beyond the feasibility phase. Suddenly, we were short of money. I guess that was the time I was totally vindicated for my near-blind faith in Makerere staff's intellectual capacity and ability. It was beginning to look like a bad case of, "I told you so". Unfortunately, the funds had run out before we had concluded the negotiations for the Learning and Innovation Loan (LIL) with the World Bank. Any additional Rockefeller Foundation funding was awaiting the LIL. It was time to swallow our pride and make some hard and painful choices; either to terminate the programme prematurely until more money came in or revise the size of the grants downwards and hope that, in the process, members of staff would understand our predicament.

Dampening staff morale was always my worst fear, for the simple fact that it would spell the premature end of a much hyped novel experiment in community engagement on a large scale, something we had never done before. After some serious discussions and a lot of agonising over the difficult decisions we had to make, we agreed that the latter option offered a less embarrassing way forward, but which in a way made us look like we were trying to save face. That of course meant revising and issuing new guidelines. The sad part was that although several members of staff continued to show interest in the programme after the new guidelines were issued, many were disappointed. To some extent the initial near hysterical interest staff had shown in the I@mak.com programme waned. From then on fewer proposals were coming in, yet many important aspects of the programme remained untouched. For instance, we had not yet funded any proposal on decentralised policy research. Subsequently, members of the Committee had to work very hard to drum up more support for the programme, through more sensitisation seminars and interactions with staff in their Faculties. I am sure this experience helped dispel the myth some Committee members had about Makerere University and the quality of its staff.

Right from the beginning, the World Bank as a funding agency had played a key role in assisting the Government of Uganda implement the decentralisation programme. In my roles as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Chairman of National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and Chairman of

the Board of Directors of the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), I had met and interacted with most of the resident World Bank Country Managers over the years. Besides funding NEMA, the World Bank funded the pilot phase of the African Virtual University at Makerere. It had also provided funding for the ultra-modern Global Distance Learning facility at the Uganda Management Institute. To crown it all, on his visit to Uganda in 1995, the former World Bank President, James Wolfensohn paid me a courtesy call before delivering a lecture at the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) which was attended by the graduate students of Economics, among others.

In November 1997, his Vice-President for Africa, James Adams also visited Makerere. All this had equipped me well to work with the World Bank. In November 2000, the new Country Manager, Dr Robert (Bob) Blake in the company of Jo Ritzen, Oeindvila Dube and Harriet Nanyonjo visited Makerere University for the first time. It was an extremely fruitful visit which marked the beginning of an enduring relationship between Bob Blake and I. At the time, the World Bank and Uganda Government were exploring other ways of boosting the implementation of the decentralisation process in the country through additional capacity building. As we saw earlier, Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile was very instrumental in the Makerere-World Bank discussions. The Bank was willing to make available to the Ugandan Government a soft loan of US\$5 million to pilot some new ideas. This was the Learning and Innovations Loan (LIL) to finance innovative ways of building capacity for the decentralised districts in some critical area where capacity was either weak or lacking. The prime objective of LIL was to enhance quality service delivery in the decentralised districts. Makerere University was the agency to implement it on behalf of the Ugandan Government as part of the I@mak.com programme the Rockefeller Foundation was funding. That meant that the Foundation and the World Bank would fund the programme jointly. That in itself was groundbreaking for the two institutions. The Rockefeller Foundation, a private charity with all its flexible structures had never worked with the World Bank at Makerere. Anyone who has ever worked with the World Bank is familiar with its rigid structure, rules and procedures. We could not help wondering how and whether the two institutions could find common ground to work together in harmony; but the two had to figure out how they could work together, anyhow.

However, before the Bank could approve the LIL as a loan to the Ugandan Government and as a grant to Makerere University, we had to do an incredible amount of legwork with the Parliament of Uganda. Since the LIL was a new initiative we had to develop a full funding proposal and submit it to the World Bank, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Parliament of Uganda. Although the World Bank had indicated that it would consider funding the proposal, it was not a foregone conclusion. The proposal had to be written to the standards that met the Bank's

quality requirements, the usual rigorous standards the World Bank demands. If we presented a poorly written proposal and the Bank rejected it, we risked kissing the LIL and possibly the entire I@mak.com programme a big good-bye, because even the Rockefeller Foundation had indicated that continued funding of the I@mak.com was conditional to the World Bank approving the LIL.

Fortunately, I had brilliant people who assisted me put together a credible proposal. Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Samwiri Katunguka did an excellent drafting job and before long, we had an acceptable proposal document ready for submission to the Bank. However, it was one thing to write a superb funding proposal and quite another to get it to the Board of the Bank for approval. In matters of loan application, ordinarily the World Bank does not deal with individual institutions; it works directly with Governments. Therefore, our LIL proposal had to go through the normal Government of Uganda submission procedures. In Uganda, that was the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Fortunately, we had the support of the Permanent Secretary, Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile. In fact, he had initiated some form of dialogue with James Adams earlier in the year. Now, all that was left was tying up a few loose ends before the Ministry formally submitted the proposal to the Bank. During, their exchanges between the Bank and the Ministry of Finance, one of which I was privileged to attend, it became clear that the Bank had raised an issue that I had to clarify. A special video conference with Jim Adams was arranged for me. In spite of their very busy schedules, we held a lively conference in the World Bank, Kampala offices, which Bob Blake, Keith Muhakanizi and other officials of the Ministry of Finance attended, with Emmanuel Tumusiime Mutebile leading the discussion. I was able to answer most of the questions Jim Adams asked me. In spite of being held on what I believed was a public holiday in Uganda, it was a lively conference and all went well. From that video conference, I was left in no doubt that the Bank would approve the LIL. There were subsequent meetings in the Ministry of Finance involving Makerere University, Bob Blake and Chris Kasami, who was then the Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry and Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, and other officials of the Ministry. With the World Bank now on our side, we seemed to have had a relatively easy ride, but one more hurdle ahead. The Parliament of Uganda had to approve the loan before the Bank could finally approve the credit to the Government of Uganda and that was the catch.

Many Members of Parliament were wary and alarmed by the country's huge indebtedness to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other bilateral lending institutions. They were concerned that the Government had over-mortgaged the country to these international institutions and had advised the Ministry of Finance to cap the borrowing. It was the same Ministry of Finance that was now asking Parliament to approve a new loan. It was a tough

sale for the Minister of State, who represented the Minister of Finance. The Committee of Parliament on the Economy was not about to entertain such a request. In particular, the Committee's chair, Honourable Mafabi Nandala, who incidentally had worked as an accountant in the same Ministry before venturing into politics, was strongly opposed to the whole idea of a new loan from the World Bank and made no secret of his disapproval. As far as he was concerned, there would be no new loans. Uganda was already drowning in debt. The Government would have to find the five million dollars from its own resources and give it to Makerere. However, Honourable Rukutana, the Minister of State for Finance, who was assigned the responsibility of presenting the LIL proposal to Parliament on behalf of Makerere University, Dr Nakanyike Musisi and Samwiri Katunguka continued to press the Committee hard and their hard work paid off.

Eventually, the Committee agreed to submit it to Parliament for approval. In September 2002, Parliament approved it and gave the Government a go-ahead to finalise the negotiations with the Bank on behalf of Makerere University. That was a hard won battle. The Rockefeller Foundation topped it up with a matching grant of US\$5 million, bringing the total LIL portfolio to US\$ 10 million. This kept the I@mak.com programme going for two more years – up to the end of 2006. It was the kind of a shot-in-the arm we had been waiting for. Moreover, it could not have come at a better time. The World Bank started disbursing funds to the LIL account in December 2002, making our Christmas the merrier.

Going by the little I know about the workings of the World Bank, once the credit is approved and the credit agreement signed with the client, the Bank identifies one of its officers to oversee the client's compliance with the terms of the credit agreement. In a way this officer becomes the Bank's credit desk officer and a liaison between the Bank and the borrower. For the LIL, the Bank identified Ms Pritti Ahuja to act as Desk Officer. Ms Ahuja did not disappoint. She turned out as pretty as her name implied. I@mak.com, acting on behalf of the university, consequently asked Samwiri Katunguka to act as counterpart to Ms Ahuja in the new role of Task Manager. The two worked wonderfully well. In spite of being a comparably small loan by World Bank standards, the amount of paper work was quite demanding. The time difference between Washington DC and Kampala added to an already arduous task for the two officers. Quite often, Samwiri Katunguka had to stay behind till very late in the night, talking to Pretti Ahuja on phone. Late working turned out to be too dangerous for him as it almost cost him his life. On the unfortunate night it happened, he left office late as he often did. On his way home, armed thugs waylaid him and bundled him into the back of the pick-up truck he was driving. After a while, which I am sure must have looked like a million of years to him, the thugs dumped him and sped off with the brand new pick-up truck, never to be seen again. Luckily, they released him unharmed but as people usually say, he had a brush with death.

Although the LIL was a grant to Makerere University, we had to comply with all the usual World Bank requirements and procedures, in particular the tough procurement procedures. Fortunately, Makerere University was already operating a more or less similar procurement system, so we did not have to learn too many new things. One other Bank requirement was that the I@mak.com Secretariat had to have a qualified accountant working full time on the LIL. We were fortunate to have attracted Mr Emma Okurut in 2003.

The LIL made it possible for the I@mak.com programme to address new areas. We had already realised that without other institutions participating in the I@mak.com programme, only Makerere graduates and staff, who have a better understanding of how the decentralisation system of governance worked would be the ones contributing effectively to the Capacity Building for Decentralisation. Now there were four public universities and a host of private ones. The LIL made it possible to roll out the programme to other institutions. We invited as many universities and other institutions to participate in the I@mak.com programme as partnering or collaborating institutions. Admission of an institution as a collaborating partner was through a rigorous screening exercise which was intended to validate their competences and capacity to implement the I@mak.com programme. The institutions which qualified as partnering institutions included, among others, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Nkumba University, Uganda Martyrs' University, Nkozi; The Islamic University in Uganda at Mbale, Uganda Christian University, Mukono and the Uganda Management Institute. As you would expect, there were the usual murmurs; why was Makerere selected to "superintend" the LIL? But in time, the murmurs disappeared as everyone settled down to serious business which went beyond the usual petty institutional jealousy and rivalry. As we have seen before, the LIL and Rockefeller Foundation undergraduate and postgraduate scholarships for district staff were now also tenable at the partnering institutions. This in a way was another innovation. It was the first time Makerere University was collaborating with other institutions on a human capacity development programme which had immediate benefits to the country. The partnering institutions were encouraged to undertake the necessary curriculum development to address the needs of the district staff they were supposed to train. To ensure that the collaboration was not just skin deep, we made a provision for the partnering institutions to be represented on the I@mak.com. Father Kyazze, a Cambridge graduate, lecturer and ICT Director at the Uganda Martyrs' University, Nkozi was the first representative of the partner institutions on the Committee who came on board in late 2003.

To cement the collaboration further, the I@mak.com Secretariat staff visited these institutions regularly to ensure all was working well. In addition, we had to identify Centres of Excellence on decentralisation worldwide, where we could sponsor staff and students to undertake courses on the mechanics and dynamics

of decentralisation, governance and devolution. Unfortunately, up to the time of my retirement, we had not yet sponsored anyone for such a course.

One can attribute the success of the I@mak.com largely to the facilitating skills of Cole Dodge. Quite earlier on, he introduced the original Committee of 14 to a new and powerful decision-making tool, widely known as Visualisation in Participatory Programmes (or VIPP, in short). UNICEF and other organisations make use of this technique. The VIPP process makes extensive use of cards. Ideas are written on cards. The cards are then clustered on a billboard or a wall. As they are examined, one is able to identify major thematic problems or issues requiring action. One can use the same technique to identify solutions and interventions to address the problems. In the VIPP process, no idea is shot down or discarded because it sounds stupid. Therefore, everyone is encouraged to contribute an idea and no one dominates the discussion. The technique suited the I@mak.com decision-making process very well. There were times when I used to think that being Vice Chancellor, I had an edge over my colleagues when it came to some decisions, but some of my so-called good ideas would be thrown out in VIPP sessions.

It was a totally new learning experience for me. Although by the time the I@mak.com was through its first year many of us had sufficiently mastered the technique, we felt that we still needed a neutral and experienced person to continue facilitating our decision-making. The Rockefeller Foundation agreed to fund Cole Dodge for another year. The Committee held two kinds of meeting. One was the regular business meeting during which members of the Committee independently vetted and scored the proposals and awarded grants to the successful applicants. The second was a policy meeting which used to be held once every quarter. Usually, it was at these policy meetings that issues of how the programme was performing, how the lessons so far learnt could be integrated in the university programmes and host of other policy matters were discussed and decisions made. These were meetings which Check Mbacke, Joyce Mook and the Rockefeller officer of the Nairobi regional office would not miss. The format of the policy meetings was also different from that used at conventional meetings. Instead of a chairperson guiding the meeting, the facilitator led the discussions – as expected using the VIPP process. All members of the Central Administration, namely the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the University Secretary, the Academic Registrar before he became a full member of the Committee, the University Librarian and the Director of Planning and Development attended the policy meeting. They were usually very serious meetings.

After the programme had run for two years, we realised that we needed to make changes in the Committee and invite new members. First, it occurred to us that unless the Academic Registrar, who was the overall senior University officer in charge of academic programmes, actively participated in the I@mak.com programme, the possibility of mainstreaming its outcomes in the university

curriculum regular programmes would almost be nil, which would have been tragic for such an expensive programme. It was a risk we were not prepared to take. While members of staff were at liberty to engage in basic and fundamental research and other academic pursuits of their choice and interest, the I@mak.com programme had a very specific objective, to assist Makerere University fulfil its third mandate, namely service to the community. The logical thing to do was to invite the Academic Registrar to become a full member of I@mak.com.

Secondly, we needed some new blood from the Government side, as well as from the Makerere side, since some Deans who had been members of the Committee since its inception had retired. Mr Kiwanuka Musisi, who was a member of I@mak.com by virtue of his position as chairperson of the Local Authorities Association had changed status. The President of Uganda had appointed him Resident District Commissioner for Kampala. Joe Oloka Onyango had on his own accord resigned from the Committee. Fagil Mande too had retired from the Ministry of Education and Sports and was now an independent consultant.

Thirdly, after working so well as a team for more than two years we suddenly began to notice unexplained tension between some Committee members and the Secretariat. I guess this is what some experts would call fatigue, resulting from working intensely together for so long. Whatever the cause, it was a worrisome development. At a retreat held at the Jinja Nile Resort Hotel in late 2003, I bade farewell to the old Committee and constituted a new one. The occasion was an emotional one for me. I had worked with that Committee for the last two years and I had the privilege to bear witness to incredible accomplishments of the Committee in such a relatively short time. Therefore, their contribution had been extremely invaluable. In choosing the new external member, we were very mindful of the East African Community spirit. Dr Miriam Were came from Kenya and it was now the turn of Tanzania.

My colleague, Professor Mathew Luhanga, the long-serving Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam had the talent for spotting brilliant and promising young engineers from the Faculty of Engineering and nurturing them into good administrators. Like Makerere, the University of Dar es Salaam had been formulating and implementing some fundamental reforms and Professor Tolley Mbwete, a Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering had been at the forefront of Professor Luhanga's reform programmes. After due consideration, we agreed that Professor Mbwete was the kind of person we were looking for. We were convinced he would be an asset to the Committee. I extended an invitation to him to serve as a member of I@mak.com, and he gladly accepted. It was always a pleasure for me to find him already settled at Windsor Lake Victoria Hotel on Friday evenings when I@mak.com met and worked till Sunday. Occasionally, he would come along with one of his children and wife at his own expense to see a bit of Uganda, a country he and his family had never visited before.

Besides being a brilliant man, Professor Mbwete was a hard worker. We had no regrets having him on the Committee; he easily lived up to our expectations. At the time he joined I@mak.com, he had left the University of Dar es Salaam and had taken up a new position as Deputy Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. Interestingly, the Open University was the brainchild of Professor Geoffrey Mmaari, a Makerere-trained mathematician and once Vice Chancellor of the University of Dar es Salaam. When the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania decided to establish the Open University, Geoffrey Mmaari became its first Vice Chancellor. When time came for Mmaari to retire in 2004, Tolly Mbwete was the obvious choice to replace him. We were thrilled when we received the news of his appointment as the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania. That meant that from then on, I@mak.com had two Vice Chancellors as full members.

The new Committee worked equally hard, building on the excellent foundations laid by the previous Committee. At the same time, we decided to intensify and publicise the training courses on Decentralisation offered at the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), on behalf of the Committee. Members of staff from Makerere and partnering institutions were encouraged to attend them. However, the heavy teaching loads and other commitments made it difficult for most members of staff to devote time to the free training at the UMI.

As 2003 slowly came to a close, several projects had gone through the four-stage cycle of concept, feasibility, pilot and full implementation. Some had been evaluated. The evaluation was rigorous, based on a peer review process by external evaluators. Besides the final report, the Committee requested the team leader of every project that had gone through the full cycle to make an oral presentation. I read very many interesting final reports and listened to the staff's good oral presentations. I found a number of them quite outstanding. Without expounding any personal bias, the following projects left an impression on me: Professor Elly Katunguka Rwakishaya's internship project entitled: "Attitudinal Change and Enhancement of Practical Training to Future Veterinary Service Providers in the Decentralised Districts", which involved the undergraduate Veterinary students undertaking practical training on the farms of practising farmers in the rural areas, was one of them. Students were required to stay full-time on the farm with the farmers' families and participating in the farm chores and the daily routines. The routines included milking the cows twice a day, early in the morning and late in the evening; on the spot assessment of the quality of the milk; regular examination of the animals for undetected disease and a myriad of others. Given the perceived bad reputation of Makerere students, it was the more remarkable that the farmers willingly accepted the Vet students on their farms, providing them with the opportunity to have hands on training on their expensive cows, as well as their accommodation and upkeep. The students were

equally magnanimous in their behaviour and willingness to learn from the not so well educated farmers. At the end of the project in 2004, Professor Rwakishaya had found a way of integrating the experience into the training and internship component of the Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine curriculum.

Sam Luboga's innovative Curriculum Revision and Refresher Course for the Medical Practitioners was equally impressive. In 2003, the panel we set up to assess the quality of the projects for the first Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence judged Sam Luboga's project as the best for that round, thus becoming the first project to win the Award. Dr Luboga received his award from the university's new Chancellor, Professor Apolo Nsibambi during the October 2003 graduation ceremony. Slowly but surely we were meeting the rather ambitious objectives of I@mak.com. The designing and development of a full-fledged three-year undergraduate degree course in Local Government in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration did not escape my attention either.

In terms of relevance to the programme's ideals of improving service delivery in the decentralised districts through training and retraining of the district staff, the Department of Political Science and Public Administration came quite close. My old Chemistry Department, now under the leadership of one of my former postgraduate students, Dr Steven Nyanzi, was involved in a project on bio-fuels. They had designed both fixed and portable simple biogas systems for the rural community. Although biogas production was not a new technology in Uganda, its production had never been properly popularised or made simple enough for the rural community. Dr Nyanzi and his colleagues not only made simple designs, but for the first time they also trained local technicians from different parts of the country in the construction of simple biogas digesters. According to our categorisation, this project fell under Demonstrations and Extension. The Committee judged it as outstanding, and it won the Vice Chancellor's Award of Excellence.

In 2004, shortly before I left the university, the Committee introduced new aspects to the programme and a full-time Monitoring and Evaluation expert joined the Secretariat to strengthen that function. The Community of Practice, involving all members of the Committee travelling upcountry to meet district officials from the pilot districts was another new feature. The first one I attended, with some World Bank and Rockefeller Foundation officials, was held in Mbarara in Western Uganda in late 2003. The second was in Mbale in May 2004. At these meetings, the Committee members listened to presentations on the progress and the difficulties the district officials were experiencing as they implemented the programme. Solutions and the way forward were then discussed. It was during the Mbarara meeting that I met Michael Crawford, who later became the Bank's lead official for the Millennium Science Initiative in Uganda.

The Community of Practice was one way of cementing and improving the relationship between the university and the districts participating in the I@mak.

com programme. Likewise, the Committee had devoted a separate business session of the Entebbe weekend meetings to a discussion with the district statisticians and planners. The basic element of that discussion was how I@mak.com could help them improve their job performance in collecting and analysing quality data on which some critical planning decisions were based. It was interesting, but at the same time disheartening to listen to the challenges they faced everyday as they went about their work: lack of adequate tools like good computers and the fact that, more often than not, the districts' political leadership sidelined them in key decisions.

After stepping down, I thought it would be a fitting occasion for me to bid farewell to the many district officials we had worked closely with right from the inception of programme. The next Community of Practice meeting was held in Arua town in 2005, which presented me with an opportunity to meet the group for the last time. It was an emotional, but also a crowning occasion for me as I reflected back on the early beginnings of the I@mak.com initiative, the long hours of hard work, the problems and challenges we faced as we implemented the programme, the near-blind faith I had in the ability of Makerere staff to implement the programme successfully, and seeing some of the outcomes of the programme.

In my considered opinion, the one most important test the I@mak.com programme had to pass and pass with flying colours to qualify as a successful initiative was its ability to survive beyond Ssebuwufu and donor funding. Its sustainability was crucial. It had to outlive me, the Rockefeller Foundation and the World Bank funding. So, as my departure drew nearer, the Committee persistently emphasised this point at almost every meeting. I could sense a feeling of uneasiness in the air. The Committee members seemed to be worried about the future of the programme after my departure. Some believed that this innovative initiative could die after my departure, especially so as some had started calling it the "Ssebuwufu Project". The Committee wanted to be sure that I@mak.com would be securely anchored in the University structures with or without me. They suggested that the best way to ensure the programme's continuity was to institutionalise the I@mak.com. Right from the beginning, behind I@mak.com had been a Vice Chancellor's Committee to assist in implementing the project. No doubt it would remain so under my successor, but the Committee wanted to be sure that the transition would not disrupt the programme's activities. Senate was our entry point. The Academic Registrar assured the Committee that I@mak.com would be an agenda item for one of the regular Senate meetings. Dr Nakanyike Musisi agreed to prepare the requisite documents for Senate. She also made a visual presentation to an attentive Senate. Since most of the Senate members were beneficiaries of the programme, it was like preaching to the converted, they had no problem recommending to the University Council that I@mak.com becomes

a task-specific standing Committee of the University Council. The Council also had no problem approving the Senate's recommendation.

Finally, this innovative programme had become a permanent feature of the university, but this did not silence its critics. Despite the demonstrable benefits that had accrued to both students and staff, there were still many within and outside the university, who persisted in the belief that the programme was actually diverting the university from striving to regain its position as a centre of academic excellence in Africa to a low-level polytechnic. Those who were against it saw it as a radical departure from the traditional university mission. Fortunately for the Committee, there were also many who held the contrary view. They took pride in the fact that Makerere was beginning to move out of the ivory tower into the community. According to them, the programme had cleverly combined that role with the high intellectual engagement, and the university had not compromised on its academic standards in any way. If anything, the programme was enriching the university curriculum. They argued that as an African university,

Makerere had to move away from the European medieval university mentality and become relevant to the unique needs of Africa. To them, through the I@mak.com programme, the university was beginning to do that. It was the kind of programme which justified the university's claim that it was not an elitist institution as it was often perceived to be. Whichever way you prefer to look at it, my guess is that this debate will be one of the enduring legacies of the I@mak.com initiative at Makerere in the 21st century.

### **The University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnership in Africa (USHEPiA) – A Regional Graduate Programme Fostering Inter-African University Cooperation**

Besides the I@mak.com, the Rockefeller Foundation continued to support other initiatives at Makerere. Some had a regional dimension. Notable among the regional programmes the Foundation funded, in conjunction with the Mellon Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, was the University of Cape Town-based University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnership in Africa (USHEPiA) and the Forum on Agricultural Resources Husbandry Programme. USHEPiA involved postgraduate training in eight collaborating universities in Eastern and Southern Africa, namely the University of Cape Town, which was also the coordinating centre for the programme and the hub of the network, University of Botswana, University of Zimbabwe, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Zambia, University of Nairobi, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, and Makerere University.

The initiative was born out of a meeting held at the University of Cape Town in early 1994. James Higenyi, the Dean of Technology and I were expected to

attend the Cape Town meeting at which USHEPiA was formalised as a regional initiative. However, a strike by MUASA for better salaries which coincided with the meeting made it impossible for me to travel to South Africa. It was too risky to leave my house on fire. Since I was absent at that founding meeting, Makerere University was almost eliminated from the consortium. In spite of our conspicuous absence from the meeting, the Vice Chancellors and the Programme Coordinator, Professor Martin West – one of the Deputy Vice Chancellors of the University of Cape Town – who attended the meeting in Cape Town agreed to keep Makerere in the network. However, to formalise our participation in the network, we had to sign a Memorandum of Understanding the other Vice Chancellors had signed in Cape Town. Professor Martin West was kind enough to bring the document to Makerere for my signature. It was one of the programmes which supplemented the university's staff development efforts, as it opened an unexpected opportunity for our staff to study for their advanced degrees at the University of Cape Town, fully paid for by USHEPiA. One of the young members of staff of the School of Education, Gorette Nakabugo, who took her MPhil at UCT under the Programme in the first cohort, turned out to be an exceptionally good student. She was one of the very few students to have graduated with a distinction. In 2000, she went back to UCT for a PhD in Education Assessment, which she also completed in a record time in 2004.

USHEPiA turned out to be one of the most successful African regional capacity building networks and a good example of a successful South-to-South inter-institutional cooperation. Right from the beginning, it was designed as a sandwich model which made good use of a mix of supervisors at the student's home institution and the host university. As the programme rolled out in 1995, Professor Martin West and his energetic team, Lesley Shackleton, Nan Warner, Caz Thomas and others, became regular visitors at Makerere. Mrs Euphemia Kalema Kiwuwa, my personal assistant, assisted me to coordinate it from my office. USHEPiA was one other way the university was benefiting from the generosity of the Rockefeller and the Mellon Foundations, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Originally the network's focus was on Science and Engineering and its first name was actually USEPiA, but with funding from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Humanities were also included and the title of the network changed to USHEPiA – the lower case “i” in the name standing for the word “in”. Later, USHEPiA received additional funding from the Coca Cola Foundation, which made it possible to sponsor more fellows in Science and Engineering. It was interesting to note that USHEPiA, which started as a small step became a giant leap in human resource development for the eight participating universities some ten years later. We are grateful to the University of Cape Town and all the staff who worked so hard to make it work, as well as the fellows who successfully attended the programme.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and the Forum on Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM) – A Regional Research and Graduate Training Programme**

The FORUM involved ten universities: Eduardo Mondleni in Mozambique, University of Malawi, and University of Zimbabwe; University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, The International American University in Africa, Nairobi, and Egerton University – all in Kenya; University of Zambia, and Makerere University in Uganda. This unique programme provided research grants to staff in Schools of Agriculture in the ten universities. A portion of the grant was used to support students studying for their Masters degrees. Dr B. P. Patel (or simply BP as she was popularly known) was the Rockefeller Foundation's officer-in-charge of the programme. Originally she was coordinating the programme from her office in Malawi, but later she moved to the Rockefeller Foundations regional office in Nairobi. Not to be out-competed, my smart colleagues at the Faculty of Agriculture seized the opportunity the FORUM presented to make a kill.

By 2003 when the Rockefeller began to consider devolving the FORUM to one of the participating universities, the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere had taken up over sixty per cent of the grants, with an equally impressive output of students and publications. Professor Adipala Ekwamu of the Crop Science Department was one the most prolific FORUM researchers and had earned a reputation and respect for his exceptional hard work. No doubt the FORUM-funded research contributed significantly to his and other rapid promotions we witnessed in the Faculty of Agriculture. As usual, Makerere had done it again and done it well. After several years of administering it, initially from Malawi and later from Nairobi, the Rockefeller Foundation was ready to turn it over to one of the ten universities in the consortium. But a suitable university among the ten with that capacity to manage it had to be identified. The Foundation commissioned two consultants, Professor David Norman of Kansas State University in the USA and Professor David Njugi, formerly of the University of Nairobi and ICRAF to evaluate and assess the capacity of each of the ten institutions. After going around all ten universities, the verdict was that Makerere University had clinched the honour. It had been adjudged as the most prepared university to manage the FORUM. To me, this achievement was a further confirmation that Makerere was truly on the mend. After a series of meetings in Nairobi, it was agreed that the FORUM would also assume a new name, which reflected its independence from the ambit of the Rockefeller Foundation's Nairobi office. The nine founding Vice Chancellors, during a meeting held in Inter-Continental Hotel in Nairobi in early 2004 which I chaired, adopted and confirmed the name "Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)". They

also confirmed Makerere as the new home for the programme. Jane-frances Nabawanuka ensured that the FORUM was legally registered in Uganda with the Registrar of Companies. Although the Rockefeller Foundation would continue to fund it for some time, the devolved FORUM had to solicit additional funding from other sources. That was a tough challenge we all accepted.

All Vice Chancellors of the participating universities constituted the Board of Directors. The Vice Chancellor of Makerere University was the automatic chair of the Board and by default I ended up being the first chairperson of the Board of the new RUFORUM. Before we got ready to pop the champagne, Makerere University had to guarantee that the programme would enjoy full autonomy, except for the oversight function which was delegated to the Vice Chancellor as chair of the programme's Board of Directors. It was a condition we easily fulfilled. Our Legal Officer, Ms Jane-frances Nabawanuka who drafted the protocols did an excellent job. Incidentally, the transfer of the programme from the Rockefeller Foundation to Makerere also marked the retirement of long-serving Dr B. P. Patel. When she was bidding us farewell, she indicated that she would be going back to her home in Bangalore, India. It was a sad occasion to see her go.

My immediate challenge was to find an appropriate accommodation for a regional programme of this nature amidst the severe scarcity of space at the university. The solution was simple: rob Paul and pay Peter. An under-utilised flat in the refurbished Lincoln House which had been allocated to one of the departments did not escape my attention. Since I was desperate, I persuaded Professor Epelu Opio to re-allocate the flat to RUFORUM. It was meant to be a temporary arrangement, while we searched for a permanent alternative. I had my eyes on house number 151 Garden Hill, the former residence of Professor Senteza Kajubi. It was thought a suitable home for the programme, but there was a catch. When Professor Kajubi vacated the house in the late 1980s, it was handed over to the Italian Embassy as part of the university's in-kind contribution to a project the Italian Government was funding at the Faculty of Technology. The Embassy was using it as residence for the visiting Italian professors working on the project whenever they came to Makerere. By early 2004, the last phase of the project had long ended and there was little hope there would be a follow-up phase. After due consultation with the Italian Embassy, we handed over the house to RUFORUM in appreciation of the enormous contribution the Rockefeller Foundation had made to the university over the decades. I must admit it was not an easy decision. Naturally, our friends at the Italian Embassy were disappointed when we told them that we wanted the house back. I remember the many telephone calls and visits Jane-frances Nabawunaka had to make to the Italian Embassy, asking them to hand over the house. They kept re-assuring us that the Italian Government would soon approve funding for a follow-up phase. They wanted to keep the

house in case they got confirmation from Rome. They warned us that the absence of suitable accommodation for the Italian professors would jeopardise the chances of renewing the project. However, we counter-argued that we wanted the house to take care of an emergency, adding that if the negotiations for a follow-up project succeeded, the university would find another house for the professors. In the end, like good diplomats, they did let us have the house back, so there was no longer need for the flat in Lincoln House.

The accommodation problem behind us, the next challenge was to find a capable person to coordinate the programme. The Board had agreed that the position would be competitive, so we had to advertise as widely as we could. The advertisement attracted several good candidates and, after a gruelling interview held at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel in 2004, the Board identified Professor Adipala Ekwamu as the best candidate for the job. He had made an impression on even the most sceptical Vice Chancellors by his presentation and his deep knowledge of what the job entailed. No doubt, he had prepared well for the interview. In fact, it was the first I saw him with a shaven scalp. When the interviews were over, I invited all the Vice Chancellors to the university to look at the flat where I thought the programme would be temporarily housed, while we refurbished its permanent headquarters at 156 Pool Road. Although they liked the newly refurbished flat in Lincoln House, they were even happier when they visited the Garden Hill house. It was an old house in dire need of a serious facelift and the access road was in a bad shape too. The main plus in its favour was its size. It was far bigger and somewhat isolated. The Board members urged us to drop the Lincoln House option and source for funding to renovate the bungalow as quickly as possible. I also used the occasion to give my fellow Vice Chancellors a quick tour of the university.

I remember during a stop-over at the Faculty of Technology, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Levi Nyagura who had visited Makerere a few years earlier, commented positively on how we had succeeded in turning around the bad things he had seen then in a relatively short time, which in his view was a sign of good leadership. Then he had seen Makerere in a dilapidated state, now he was seeing a different Makerere, with new buildings and most of the old ones renovated. Professor Crysus Kiamba, who was then Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi thought the Makerere Vice Chancellor had the smallest desk he had ever seen in any Vice Chancellor's office. I enjoyed those titbits about my institution. Although it got off to a slow start, because of the long illness and subsequent death of Professor Adipala Ekwamu's wife, the programme quickly picked up. Professor Adipala raised money and by early 2005, he had renovated the house and fenced it. The Regional University FORUM (RUFORUM) was finally off with a good start.

### **Rockefeller Foundation Support to Other Initiatives – The Change from Faculty to College**

The Rockefeller Foundation also extended its generous support to other new initiatives, one of which was an attempt to do something about the over-centralised University Administration, which was increasingly becoming inefficient and unable to keep up with rapidly changing circumstances. One solution involved clustering several faculties and departments with closely related academic mandates into colleges headed by a Principal, who would act as both the academic and administrative head. We have already come across examples of such attempts spearheaded by the Faculties of Agriculture, Forestry and Nature Conservation, Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, Faculty of Science (Fisheries unit in the Department of Zoology), as well as the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, which were aimed at translating this initiative into concrete action with varying degrees of success. The main objective of the initiative was to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of academic administration and management. The idea was that when fully decentralised, the central administration would retain only a residual administrative role in the day-to-day decision-making and management of the university. The Vice Chancellor would then have time to concentrate on the big picture of coordination, supervision, planning, fundraising, public relations and legal affairs, among other non-routine administrative functions. In fact, this concept was the centrepiece of the university's first Strategic Plan.

The MISR report which had given the university the stimulus to set up the I@mak.com had indicated that much as Makerere's trained doctors were competent, they nevertheless lacked skills to deal with the rather unique problems of health service delivery in a rural setting. Since the country had embraced the decentralised form of governance, the training of doctors also had to change. That was the challenge the Medical School had to address. In order to do a better training job, in 2000 the Faculty of Medicine began the process of transforming itself into a College of Health Sciences. The faculty had been toying with this idea as early as 1998. In fact, between 1998 and 2000, the faculty had produced a couple of plans, but all fell through. The efforts failed to stimulate interest amongst staff. It was time to try a new approach. The answer was to set up a planning committee, which was dubbed the Max Plan.com. To kick-start the process, we applied for a grant which the Rockefeller Foundation kindly approved. Cole Dodge had proved an excellent facilitator for I@mak.com, so we decided to entrust the whole process to him, which he gladly accepted. He fell back on the VIPP methodology, which had proved to be a powerful planning tool.

The Max Plan process was as elaborate as it was novel. The majority of the Max Plan.com members were drawn outside the Medical School. They came from the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development, Ministry of Education and Sports, Uganda Medical Association, Uganda Private Practitioners

Association, Public Health Nurses' College, Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau, Mulago Hospital Management, Ministry of Health, Makerere University Council, Medical Students' representatives and representatives of the Faculty of Medicine. Ordinarily, the Committee would be dominated by the Medical School staff; so, understandably, staff could not comprehend why outsiders had to be so heavily involved in decisions which affected the future of their faculty and why the facilitator, apparently with the consent of the Vice-Chancellor and their Dean, had decided to load the planning committee with outsiders, leaving the university and the Medical School staff with about forty percent of representation. As expected, initially the Dean, Professor Nelson Sewankambo had a bit of hard time selling the idea. But with a lot of explanation on the merits of using that kind of approach and after re-assuring them that once the planning was done, the Faculty Board would take over and would have the final say before the plan went to the University Senate and Council, the majority of staff agreed to give the Max Plan.com a chance. The Max Plan.com was an innovative way of bringing the end-users of the faculty's graduates together to plan a new type of Medical School and medical curriculum. The Max Plan recommended that the Faculty of Medicine should quickly transform into a College of Health Sciences with four Schools, namely the School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Medicine, which encompassed the new Infectious Diseases Institute, School of Health Sciences and School of Public Health, and twelve departments. A Learning Resource Centre, an Institute of Continuing Medical Education and an ICT Unit would be added later. The college would also adopt an innovative problem-based learning (PBL) curriculum.

The recommendation was a radical departure from the traditional way the School had been training doctors. Under the traditional curriculum, students spent the first two years studying the pre-clinical biomedical disciplines of Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry, without ever going on the wards. They only went on the wards in the teaching hospital in the last three years of their training, studying the clinical disciplines. There was minimal linkage between the pre-clinical and the clinical disciplines. Some saw it as disjointed training. The new curriculum integrated both the Biomedical Sciences and the clinical disciplines right from the first year. The objective was to demonstrate to the student the link between all medical disciplines quite early in their training. Admittedly, it would be quite a daunting task to convince everyone to accept the new and perhaps untested curriculum. However, Dr Sam Luboga, the Deputy Dean responsible for Education was undeterred; he threw all his energy into it and it worked.

Due to the meticulous planning, Senate had no difficulty recommending the proposal to the University Council to transform the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences with six Faculties. In November 2001, the University Council approved the College of Health Sciences to replace the old Faculty of Medicine, which had also evolved from the original Makerere College Medical

School, which opened in 1924, barely two years after the college opened. With the approval granted, it was time to initiate the process of operationalising the college. We had targeted to open the college in the 2001/02 academic year. Both Senate and the University Council had agreed to our request to ask Professor Sewankambo to act as Principal until such a time when a substantive one would be appointed. By the time the College of Health Sciences was approved, the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001 had come into effect. Under the new Act, only the Chancellor had the powers to appoint the Principal, either in acting capacity or substantively. My powers as Vice Chancellor were limited to appointing acting Deans. But a college with Deans but without a Principal was not a smart proposition. To complicate matters further, at the time, the university had no Chancellor. President Museveni ceased to be Chancellor as soon as he gave the Presidential assent to the new Act in March 2001. To say the least, that was a difficult time for the university. Not only did it not have a Chancellor; it had no Governing Council either. In one of those desperate moves, I remember attempting to invite the President as a special guest to grace the graduation ceremony with his presence in April that year. As was the usual practice, the invitation had to be routed through the Minister of Education and Sports, who at the time happened to be Dr Khidu Makubuya, an old friend of the family. His advice was that since the President had ceased to be Chancellor, by inviting him to preside over the graduation ceremony, we would be acting outside the law. Unfortunately, the Minister had misunderstood our intentions. We were well aware that we were not inviting the President to confer degrees, but to give the ceremony some respectability. As Vice Chancellor, I was expected to play that role, because the new Act provided for the Vice Chancellor to do so in the absence of the Chancellor. We chose not to pursue the matter further. Interestingly, I had always looked at the office of the Chancellor as purely ceremonial, with no executive powers. It now dawned on me that the absence of a Chancellor could have serious implications for the implementation of some critical decisions, like the appointment of an acting Principal for the College of Health Sciences. I thought I could circumvent the legally tangled web and do the appointment. Although it could have been seen as surreptitious, it offered the quickest way of getting the appointment through; but after seeking a legal opinion from the University Lawyers, I was advised to hold on, because the law was explicitly clear on how a Principal of a college was appointed. Therefore, the appointment of an acting Principal for the college would have to wait for the new Chancellor. It was a setback we had not anticipated and indeed a disappointment, as my colleagues in the Medical School were looking forward to quick action from my office. Up until then, the process had moved quite fast without any serious hitches.

As they say, when the problems come, they come in leaps and bounds. As we grappled with the legal nitty gritty of appointing an Acting Principal for the college, the Sessional Committee of Parliament on Social Services threw

another spanner in the works. They asked why the Committee was not informed of this fundamental change at the university before the college was approved. Apparently we had goofed on this one too. We had to take the concerns of this Parliamentary Committee very seriously. It was this Committee which decided whether Parliament would approve the college's budget or not. Therefore, before they could consider the budget estimates for the new college, they demanded answers from the University Administration. Of course, we did not have answers for them. Never before had the Parliament of Uganda been directly involved in the way Makerere University conducted its academic business or how it structured its curriculum and created academic units. What we were witnessing was a new development in our relationship with the Parliament of Uganda, which I must admit took us totally unaware. It was a big departure from tradition. In fact, at no point during the Max Planck process did it cross our minds that we had to inform the Committee on Social Services beforehand about the university's intention to transform the Faculty of Medicine into a College of Health Sciences. It was always assumed that on such matters, the university enjoyed total independence. Was this the beginning of the erosion of the university's academic freedom to innovate as it so fit, which we had been taking for granted? To complicate matters more, our interaction with Parliament was not a matter of regular routine. We only met the Committee on Social Services as and when we were invited. On hindsight perhaps, I should have given a hint to the chairperson of the Committee, Honourable Mrs Dorothy Hyuha about what was cooking, as a way of preparing her for what was coming. It was now too late; I could not roll the clock back. Given all these mounting problems, we decided to heed the advice of the University Lawyers and wait for the appointment of a new Chancellor. To my disappointment and that of my colleagues in the Medical School and our funder too, the College of Health Sciences remained shelved up to the time I left the university in mid-2004. I left it to my successor to follow up.

One of the numerous exciting things about the Rockefeller Foundation and its generous support to Makerere University during my time as Vice Chancellor, which left a lasting impression on me, was the privilege to host its President, Dr Gordon Conway, four times during his presidency. I have already given an account of his first visit. The second visit was in January 2000. This time, Dr Gordon came with the President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Dr Vartan Gregorian. As I have already pointed out, round about this time, the Carnegie Corporation had just resumed supporting Makerere again. The two Presidents, in the company of their officials, were unfortunate to have arrived in Uganda in the midst of the dry and unusually hot season. We had arranged for a press conference in the VIP lounge at Entebbe Airport, but as the conference began, I could see the discomfort Dr Vartan Gregorian was experiencing in the poorly air-conditioned lounge. He was sweating profusely while Dr. Conway was a little more comfortable in tropical heat and did most of the talking.

Perhaps the difference between the two men was the fact that while Gordon Conway had been in Uganda for a while and had already acclimatised to the tropical heat, having worked in other tropical parts of the world before, Vartan Gregorian was visiting Uganda for the first time. We tried to keep the press conference short. Typical of our media houses, they sent young and apparently less experienced journalists. Certainly most of the questions they asked were dull, uncritical and could use a dose of ingenuity. However, to our delight the next day the photograph of the two Presidents appeared in *The New Vision* newspaper. Dr Gordon Conway's third visit to Uganda in 2002 was memorable for a particular reason. I dared to go with him where angels feared to tread at that particularly time in our country's history. This time, he came with several of his New York and Nairobi-based staff. As usual, Joyce Mook was one of them and so was Peter Matlen, who at the time was in charge of the Food Security Programme at the headquarters in New York, but later took over from Check Mbacke as Director of the Nairobi Regional Office.

Dr Gordon Conway arrived in the country when President Museveni had pitched tent in Gulu where he was overseeing some military operation and was not about to come down to Kampala to meet the President of the Rockefeller Foundation. But Dr Conway wanted to meet him and exchange views on a number of initiatives the Foundation had in the pipeline. The alternative was for Dr Conway and his team to fly to Gulu and meet the President there. The idea of flying the President of the Rockefeller Foundation with many of his senior staff to Gulu at that time was a troublesome thought. My immediate concern was the security situation in that part of our country. So much had been said and written about the troubles in Northern Uganda and here we were, flying the President of one of the major American philanthropic foundations into the midst of what most people thought was a security nightmare.

Honourable Sam Kutesa, then one of the Ministers of State in the Ministry of Finance, was the officer Government tasked to handle the arrangements for Dr Conway's visit to Gulu. The Ugandan Government chartered a local airline, Eagle Airlines, to fly him and his team to Gulu. The trip was also the first for me. Although I had been to Gulu several times before, I had never gone there by air. However, I was aware that the Gulu airstrip had a good runway, so I didn't have to fret about a bumpy landing. Much as I found flying to Gulu exciting, I had some anxious moments about the trip. In the end, all my worst fears never materialised. In fact, it turned out to be a flight to remember and for good reasons. Firstly, one of our pilots, Ms Apolot, was the first Ugandan woman pilot. Secondly, apart from the many army vehicles running up and down, including the convoy which escorted us from the airstrip and back, we found Gulu as peaceful as any other part of the country. Contrary to impressions you got when you heard news over the radio and television or read in the newspapers about the northern part

of our country, people in Gulu town were busy going about their normal daily business as other Ugandans in the more peaceful parts of the country. Thirdly, the President was residing in the army barracks, so getting there past all the security screening raised our adrenaline levels, particularly our American friends, who were not used to this way of life, but all went and ended well.

When we arrived at Gulu Military Barracks, the President was still busy. We were told we had to wait until we were called on. Our security personnel escorted us to what used to be the Acholi Inn under the defunct Uganda Hotels Corporation, but which was now privately owned, to while away the time whilst we waited for our turn. Back to the barracks, we had what I thought was a very thought-provoking meeting with the President. In fact, some of the issues the President raised must have taken Gordon Conway by surprise. What I remember most about the interaction between the two men seated face to face as the debate switched to Biotechnology, genetically modified food and organisms (or GMOs) was President Museveni's persistent question why the scientists had decided to abandon the old and less controversial breeding methods, which he believed was a much better way of producing safe food, and opted for the more controversial biotechnology. I am sure Dr Conway was amused when the President said that he had been an animal breeder for many years and was using the less controversial traditional breeding techniques, pointing out that sometimes the new Genetic Engineering techniques involved transfer of genes across unrelated species and that was the heart of the controversy and the source of disagreement in the GMO debate. In spite of its assurances, people were not sure about the safety of GMOs as a source of food.

The President's knowledge on the GMOs and the Biotechnology amazed us. Dr Conway, with occasional help from his officials and people like me seated in the audience, tried his best to explain to the President the enormous advantages Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering techniques had over the traditional breeding techniques, including the increased resistance to disease and reduced post-harvest losses. This lively impromptu debate took up much of the discussion between the two men. At the end of it all, Dr Gordon Conway was quick to admit that he found the debate challenging, adding that he had found the discussion with President Museveni relevant and very useful. It was now time to take leave of the President and head back to Entebbe. The interesting debate on Biotechnology and the GMOs aside, going to Northern Uganda by air provided us with an unexpected spin off – the opportunity to see the majestic River Nile from the air, gently meandering out of Lake Kyoga like a snake on the desert sand and cascading down the Murchison falls on its way to Lake Albert. Seeing an aerial view of this spectacular marvel of nature was an experience of a lifetime. Despite my initial security concern, having a bird's eye-view of Lake Kyoga, located almost at the heart of Uganda, the mighty Victoria Nile and a glimpse of

the Murchison falls in the distance, more than compensated for my initial fears and apprehension about flying to Gulu.

On his last visit as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr Gordon Conway came along with his wife, the chair of the Foundation's Board of Trustees, James Orr and his wife, and a few other trustees of the Foundation. This time, we had a packed programme for him and his team, which kept them busy throughout the visit. James Orr and some of the trustees left earlier after they had had a personal impression of the outcomes of the programmes and projects the Foundation was supporting or had supported at Makerere and in Uganda in the past. Professor Adipala Ekwamu of the Department of Crop Science at the Faculty of Agriculture and a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation grant for his PhD at Ohio State University, was a good events organiser. We asked him to put together a good programme for Dr Conway's visit. He gladly accepted and produced an exciting programme, which included an exhibition and a publication detailing all the programmes and projects the Foundation had financed at Makerere over the years. The publication also featured the Foundation's programmes which were ongoing as well as the impact they had had on the university and the country.

Fortunately, some of the first Ugandan members of staff of the university whom the Foundation had trained and assisted to join the faculty, under the Special Lecturer Scheme of the University of East Africa in the early 1960s, were still alive. They were now senior professors who were almost retiring from the university's service. We requested those who could make it to meet the President of the Foundation, who had made it possible for them to join the academic staff of the university at a time they were being told that there was no establishment to accommodate them. It was an emotional moment for me as I saw my senior colleagues, Professors Gabriel Kiwuwa, Patrick Rubaihayo, Joseph Mukiibi and William Banage taking turns to shake hands with President Conway and say thank you to the Rockefeller Foundation. In spite of the fact that it was put up at short notice, the exhibition in the front courtyard of the Faculty of Agriculture was a rich one. It included the numerous scientific publications which had come out of the projects the Foundation had funded at Makerere over the years. Also on display were some of the new varieties of food crops, including the huge FHIA bananas that had come out of the agricultural research the Foundation had supported and which had now become part of the mainstream crops Ugandan farmers were growing, as well as the I@mak.com projects and a lot more. Unfortunately, time was too short for him to look at each one of them in detail, but certainly it was an impressive record of the Rockefeller's contribution to Makerere University and the country as a whole.

Later in the morning, Dr Gordon Conway visited the Kawanda Research Institute, one of the six NARO research institutes, to see the new and state-of-the-art Biotechnology laboratory specialising in tissue culture, which the Foundation

had financed, and the long running Banana Research Programme. As we have seen, this was one of the programmes on which Makerere University Faculty of Agriculture staff were collaborating with researchers at Kawanda. It was another exciting occasion, as Dr Mathias Magunda, the Institute Director led him on a tour of the facilities the Rockefeller Foundation was supporting there. The tissue culture technique was perhaps the nearest answer to President Museveni's concerns about the GMOs and genetic engineering. It is a modern technique similar to cloning, but does not involve trans-gene manipulation. Shortly before leaving Kawanda for another appointment in Luwero District in the afternoon, President Conway briefly addressed a gathering of the institute's staff and invited guests, expressing satisfaction at the tremendous progress he had seen at Makerere and Kawanda.

From Kawanda, it was time to visit another site at Nakaseke Primary Teachers' College, located deep in rural Luwero, some fifty or so kilometres north of Kampala, where Makerere University was running two Rockefeller-funded projects. Nakaseke was a new generation of core Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) the Government of Uganda had built as part of its effort at improving the quality and quantity of teachers for the massive Universal Primary Education programme or UPE as it popularly called. Luwero was one of the operational areas where President Museveni and his rag-tag army of peasants waged a five-year bush war, which eventually brought the National Resistance Movement to power in January 1986. Nakaseke, like most towns in Luwero, was severely damaged during the long bush war. However, at the time of Dr Conway's visit there, the town had almost recovered from the ravages of war. The town was boasting of an impressive complex of modern buildings nearby, which I understood were housing a private nursing training school. The Teachers' College was further west, a couple of kilometres from Nakaseke town centre. It was the first time I was visiting the new college too. My first impression of the college was that of an island of modern small and medium-sized bungalows surrounded by forest and jungle on all sides in the middle of nowhere. Nevertheless, the wonders of modern communication technology – the cellular telephone and the Internet – ensured that neither staff nor students were completely cut off from the rest of the country, and the world for that matter. No doubt, Dr Conway had seen a bit of Uganda's beautiful countryside on his many visits to Makerere, but this time he was seeing the real rural Uganda, which I guessed added a little bit of flavour to his visit to the college. Mrs Byakika, the college Principal was at hand to welcome us.

Since Kyambogo University had the oversight over all PTCs in the country, Professor James Lutalo Bosa, the Vice Chancellor of that university was also there to welcome and interact with Dr Gordon Conway. Waiting for Dr Conway was Dr Moses Musaaazi of the Department of Electrical Engineering, who was in charge

of the low-cost sanitary pads, hygienic insulator and water harvesting projects; and Dr Robinnah Kyeyune of the Language Education Department, leader of the Minds Across Africa School Club (MAASC) supplementary readers project in which Nakaseke PTC was one of the participating institutions, together with some of the surrounding primary schools. Dr Conway first inspected Dr Musaazi's interesting project. Dr Musaazi explained in graphic details how his project had helped the college maintain a high level of hygiene and how the water harvesting technology had assisted the college ease the chronic water shortage. After touring the projects, Dr Conway listened attentively to an account given by a smart female student on the convenience and usefulness of the Dr Musaazi's sanitary pads. Incidentally, both Musaazi and Conway had something in common. Both of them had been to the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London – although at different times. Gordon Conway was there as a Professor and Moses Musaazi as a Masters and PhD student in Electrical Engineering respectively in the '70s.

I recall Gordon thanking Musaazi for making his engineering skills useful to the community. Dr Kyeyune's project on developing reading and writing skills at primary school level was also progressing well, to the satisfaction of Dr Conway. After an interesting interactive discussion that included some of the challenges which she had encountered in the course of implementing her project, it was time to end the day in Nakaseke before dark. It was already getting late in the evening. We bade farewell to the Principal, her staff and students and started the rough ride on the dusty and bumpy sixteen-kilometre rough stretch linking Nakaseke and Wobulenzi town on the Kampala- Gulu highway and back to Kampala. It was a busy day but, by all accounts, a productive one. The Principal too had impressed us with her warm hospitality and management of the college.

To crown his last visit to Makerere as President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr Conway delivered another public lecture in the Main Building. This time he was not about to take chances with the power supply in the Main Building, which almost made him abort his first lecture on his first visit to Makerere; so he abandoned the powerpoint projector, and instead, he decided to deliver it in the old-fashioned way, like a priest delivering a sermon from the pulpit. As usual it was an interesting lecture, but members of staff were already in a sombre mood. They had started agitating for more pay, so they were not as receptive as they were during his first lecture. He kept referring to me as a "good Vice Chancellor", but members of the academic staff, who made up the majority in the audience, were in no mood to listen to that kind of stuff being said about the Vice Chancellor. After all, they had heard that the Vice Chancellor was paying himself a hefty salary while they continued to receive peanuts, so they were angry. As we shall see later, the Vice Chancellor had long ceased to be a good man. Therefore, unlike the previous occasion, their response was a muted one.

I am not a superstitious person by nature, but once I was tempted to believe that Dr Conway was either an exceptionally lucky man, or had some powerful white magic up his sleeves that ensured that, every time he visited Uganda, President Museveni was in residence and could set aside time to meet with him. Even on his last visit, President Museveni managed to squeeze in time to meet him at Nakasero State House. While thanking the Rockefeller Foundation for supporting research on Uganda's indigenous green cooking banana plantains – *matooke* – that had led to improved varieties and high yields, the President lamented the limited markets for Uganda's bananas and the fact that no one was making effort to add value to the bananas. According to him, most of the serious research was agronomical, which no doubt had led to a lot of improvements in banana cultivation, but the loop was far from closed. As far as President Museveni was aware, no serious research was being conducted to develop other value-added banana products. In turn, this was frustrating, as many banana farmers had no choice but to throw away the surplus they could not sell or eat, or leave them to rot in the plantations. In response, Dr Conway agreed with the President on the need to support applied research targeted at marketing and adding value to the banana.

I for one, and I am sure Gordon Conway too, found our relationship over the years as extraordinary as it had begun. He was President of the Rockefeller Foundation, an Englishman with an English accent as my American friends would say, at the helm of a renowned American charity, and myself Makerere's VC. Here we were, two middle-aged men, one tall and the other short, who had never met before, deciding to take a stroll around the Makerere University campus, way back in 1998, only to discover that we had a lot in common. For starters, like me, Gordon Conway had been the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sussex before moving to New York and like me, he was a passionate scientist. I am deeply indebted to him for the friendship and all the support he and his colleagues at the Rockefeller Foundation extended during the years I was Vice Chancellor at Makerere, and the support they continue to give to Makerere University. Even when the Foundation's finances were in a bad shape after the New York Stock Exchange crash of 1999, forcing it to scale down many programmes and cancel some, their commitment to Makerere was unaffected. That is what I call true institutional partnership. I can safely say without fear of exaggeration that most of what I managed to achieve in my long years as Makerere's Vice Chancellor bears the thumbprint of Gordon Conway and the Rockefeller Foundation. As they say, a friend in need is a friend indeed! The Rockefeller Foundation was and continues to be Makerere's true friend in need. I thank Gordon and all his colleagues with whom I worked so closely for over ten years of my service to Makerere University and Uganda's higher education sector.

### **The Rockefeller Foundation and the Banana Project – Improving the Productivity of Uganda’s Favourite Food Crop; the Matooke (Uganda’s Green Bananas)**

On his fourth and last visit to Uganda when I was Vice Chancellor, Dr Gordon Conway engaged in a friendly exchange with President Museveni over the banana research the Rockefeller Foundation had been supporting in Uganda over the years, and how further research on the crop could lead to value added products and improve its marketability. That was precisely because the Rockefeller Foundation had contributed to a banana green revolution in Uganda. The banana project was one of the most successful research projects the Foundation had funded in Uganda.

The research phase I am reporting on in the next few paragraphs started in 1999/2000, after the first phase had come to an end. It was negotiated by the Department of Crop Science of the Faculty of Agriculture and later joined by NARO. The primary objective of this phase was to continue with efforts to improve the East African highland banana production in Uganda and later in other banana growing parts of East Africa. The project dealt with soil fertility, plantation management, crop improvement in terms of conventional breeding, as well as modern molecular biology breeding. Then the project had well established modern laboratory facilities at Kabanyolo and Kawanda and developed several varieties of cultivars (or protocols as the breeders sometimes preferred to call them). The cultivars were developed from micro-propagation carried out in the tissue culture laboratories and passed on to the farmers. Compared to the traditional suckers, the cultivars propagated by tissue culture techniques made disease-free planting material. The suckers produced in the petri dishes and test tubes in a tissue culture laboratory can be regarded as clones of the adult bananas minus the disease pathogens and other undesirable characteristics, which are environment-induced.

Initially, the Dr Calsit Baliddawa, who was then the Head of the Crop Science Department was the Project leader but when he resigned from the University, the project was transferred to NARO at Kawanda under Dr Kalamura as project leader. Professor Patrick Rubaihayo, who was Baliddawa’s co-researcher on the project continued with the work at Makerere in collaboration with other Makerere staff, namely Professor Julius Kitungulu Zake from Soil Science, Dr Magambo and Dr Maurice Ogenga Latigo of the Department of Crop Science. Later, Dr Ogenga Latigo left the university to engage in politics. The project benefited the university and Uganda in a number of ways. Several postgraduate students were sponsored to undertake their Masters degree dissertation research on Uganda’s favourite crop under the supervision of the principal investigators. Through the project, both Kawanda and Makerere acquired the state-of-the-art Biotechnology

laboratories. Besides the banana farmers, including myself, three departments at Makerere, namely Crop Science, Agricultural Economics and Soil Science were direct beneficiaries of the project funding and capacity building efforts.

The projects also facilitated a link between the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere and the Catholic University in Belgium. In terms of scientific output measured by the number of publications in peer-reviewed journals, the researchers on the banana project were really prolific. They had an impressive list of publications to their credit, which contributed significantly to their promotions. Those of us who relish this delicacy were grateful to the Rockefeller Foundation for the generous support.

### **The Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD)**

Many times people have asked me what I really considered as my most memorable and enduring experience during my long tenure as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University. This was one of the questions I always found hard to answer, not because I could not single out any particular experience, but because I had too many memorable experiences to be able to pinpoint one I could call outstandingly memorable. In terms of who contributed most to the progress of Makerere University during my tenure, certainly a number of development partners come to mind. I have already singled out the Rockefeller Foundation, which is a relatively small private charitable organisation in the USA.

However, there were also many governments and government agencies across the world that provided Makerere with vital assistance, which played a critical role in its difficult recovery process. With that assistance, moreover given so generously, we were able to turn a few things round for the better. Among this category of bilateral development partners, the Royal Norwegian Government through its international cooperation and development agency, NORAD, as well as the Norwegian universities and other Norwegian institutions of higher education, come very close to the top of that list. Indeed, I have already said much about NORAD, but mainly in passing or simply as reference to specific projects or programmes the Agency had supported. Nevertheless, I want to emphasise some fine details of the long and productive relationship Makerere University on one hand and the Norwegians, NORAD and the Norwegian universities on the other hand, have enjoyed over the years, and more so during my time as Vice Chancellor, that were a truly memorable experience for me.

Going back in time, the development cooperation between Norway and Uganda started in 1963; a year after Uganda attained independence from Britain. At the time, most of the Norwegian development assistance to Uganda went to support the agriculture and forestry sectors. Some of that assistance came to Makerere and to Nyabyeya Forestry College, located in what is now Masindi

District. In 1970 NORAD provided funding to the Uganda Government to establish a Department of Forestry in the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere University. However, the political upheavals which followed the military coup of 1971 forced NORAD to withdraw its development aid to Uganda. The assistance which had been earmarked for Makerere University was instead given to the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Dar es Salaam based at Morogoro, which later evolved into the Sokoine University of Agriculture, named after Edward Moringe Sokoine, the late Prime Minister of Tanzania who died in a tragic road accident in 1984. However, as the country slowly returned to normalcy, Norway resumed its development assistance to Uganda. NORAD returned to Makerere in the academic year 1995/96 with an initial grant of Norwegian Kroners (NOK) three million to the Department of Forestry. The objective was to strengthen the capacity of the Department of Forestry to be able to improve research quality and extension services. The ultimate goal of NORAD's support was to assist the university provide the forestry sector with better graduates, who were expected to play the role of researchers, administrators, conservators and extension workers. While Makerere University trained and produced graduate foresters, there was also an identified need for more and better qualified technical personnel at diploma level for this vital sector. Nabyeya Forestry College offered this kind of training. Like in the 1960s, even this time round NORAD decided to include Nyabyeya Forestry College in the new development assistance to Uganda. As the Principal once lamented, the NORAD support to the college was timely and the best thing to have happened there in decades. It rescued the college from the brink of closure due to the extremely low and irregular Government subvention. To strengthen the undergraduate practical training, the department arranged for the Makerere BSc Forestry students to spend part of their study time at Nyabyeya on field work in the nearby Budongo Natural Forest Reserve. NORAD agreed to provide funding to construct an appropriate hostel for Makerere students at the college.

The Forestry Department project was excellently executed. It paved the way for the much bigger support NORAD extended to the university later. I remember the regular and productive meetings we used to have in the Ministry of Finance to review the progress of the projects and approve work plans and budgets. Thanks to Dr Kaboggoza's good project management and proper utilisation of project funds, as well as his well-written reports, we always ended the meeting satisfied that the project was achieving the objectives and the project expenditure was in compliance with the terms of the grant agreement. At the time, Mr Karl Solberg, who doubled as the desk officer for NORAD at the Norwegian Embassy in Dar es Salaam, with one or two of his colleagues used to fly in to attend these tripartite meetings. It was the first time for me to work closely with the Norwegians. Through that interaction, I soon discovered the modest and unassuming nature of the Norwegians and their passion for hard work and efficiency. I also got to

know Mr Karl Solberg. In fact, we got on well. Partly because of the success of this project, NORAD agreed to support a University-wide programme, which later became the Institutional Development Programme (IDP).

In 1997, Karl Solberg left Dar es Salaam and joined the newly opened Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kampala as First Secretary. The NORAD desk at the Embassy was also one of his responsibilities. As soon as he moved over to Kampala, he decided to pay me a courtesy call. During our discussions, which included my usual litany of needs, he indicated that, subject to successful negotiations, NORAD would be able to provide a bigger grant to support a university-wide institutional development programme, adding that NORAD was satisfied with the way we had implemented and managed the Forestry project. I hesitated to believe what I had heard and chose to wait for further news from him. It took time to hear from him again. In fact, I was beginning to suspect that perhaps the promise had fallen through. Then it happened. I received a call from him, advising that we should start planning for the new grant. He promised to get me a consultant who was familiar with the workings of NORAD.

In order to do good planning for the expected big NORAD grant, I put together what I called the NORAD Task Force, made up of some 25 members, including the Principal of Nyabyeya Forestry College, Mr W. Kasolo. I was the chair, with Professor Luboobi as my co-chair. Dr David Matovu, the chair of the University Council was also a member. In late 1999, almost a year after the Uganda-Norway Programme of Development Cooperation was signed, we held a grand planning meeting which included colleagues from the various institutions in Norway whom we were collaborating with in other Norwegian programmes like NUFU, and the Norwegian Embassy. At the end of the meeting facilitated by the consultant, Age Ronningen, a civil engineer by profession, we wrote up what amounted to a costed project proposal document. It was the first time I was introduced to the Logical Framework (normally simply referred to as logframe) planning methodology. It was hard work and some members of the drafting committee had to work on a public holiday to get the document ready. After going through a series of stages, the document was finally submitted to the NORAD Board in February 2000.

In March 2000, Karl Solberg telephoned me with the good news. The NORAD Board had approved the five-year Institutional Development Programme Grant in its entirety in principle. However, there were a few things to do before NORAD would release the money to Makerere. I was thrilled. I did not know what to say at that time. I remember telling him that I was going to dance on the top of my desk as a way of expressing my joy and gratitude to the NORAD Board. What NORAD had done was for me a dream come true. A few days later, in the company of his colleague Harold Karlsnes, who had just joined the Embassy and who later succeeded him as First Secretary when he retired, Karl Solberg

came to Makerere to discuss the modalities of implementing the IDP. It included scrutiny of our financial management system, assessing the university's capacity to implement the IDP and signing the grant agreement between the Government of Uganda and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Norway, among others.

As part of the pre-programme implementation activities, NORAD contracted PriceWaterHouseCoopers to conduct an assessment of the Finance, Internal Audit and Planning Departments, focusing on the weaknesses and gaps in requisite skills and to make recommendations thereon. By any stretch of imagination, it was a big grant. None of us had ever managed a grant on this scale, so NORAD wanted to assure itself that we had the capacity to implement the programme efficiently. In fact, it could have been much bigger. Initially, we had planned to include every department in the programme. However, after doing some number crunching, we realised that if we kept everyone and everything in, the bill would be frighteningly astronomical – some NOK220 million which at the time was equivalent to fifteen million dollars over a five-year period. I believe that if NORAD had approved such a huge grant, it would have stretched our absorptive capacity to the limit. We also realised that we would be asking NORAD for the impossible. On the advice of our consultant, we dropped the grand idea of an all-inclusive IDP and scaled down the budget. Instead we decided to focus on a few projects, which in the opinion of our consultant and our Norwegian friends were likely to have a high impact on the university and the community. With a five-year budget of NOK110 million or about fifteen million dollars NORAD had approved for the IDP, we trimmed down the list to just fifteen projects, with NOK10 million remaining unallocated for the future. This was a big investment NORAD had made to a single institution, and one hoped and prayed that everything would go on well.

The grant agreement was signed in the Boardroom of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, on June 28, 2000 with Mr Chris Kasami, the second Permanent Secretary in the same Ministry signing for the Ugandan Government. I was privy to this historical ceremony. As soon as the grant agreement became effective, the Taskforce which had done all the planning work and written the project proposal changed its role. It was transformed into a Programme Steering Committee (PSC), with the Vice Chancellor as chair and Professor Luboobi as alternate chair. According to the terms of the grant agreement, the Vice Chancellor was the *de facto* programme leader, assisted by the PSC. The Director of Planning and Development was designated as the overall Programme Coordinator and the link between the university and the Norwegian Embassy.

For a start, seven projects received funding in 2000/2001, namely: Strengthening the Department of Planning and Development (NOK8.4 million); Administrative Computing – Automation and Management Information Systems

(NOK, 9.5 million); Strengthening the Department of Gender and Women Studies (NOK4.8 million); Strengthening the Department of the Academic Registrar – Academic Records Information System (NOK1.5 million); Strengthening Research Coordination in the School of Postgraduate Studies (NOK1.8 million); Support to the Faculty of Forestry, including the Budongo Research Project (NOK9.6 million) and Support to Nyabyeya Forestry College (NOK9.4 million). In the latter part of 2000/2001 and in 2001/2002, the following projects also came on line: Faculty of Agriculture – Farm Rehabilitation, Land Purchase at Kyetume and Continuing Agricultural Education Centre at Kabanyolo (NOK twelve million in total); Department of Animal Science – the Elite Ankole Cow Research and Breeding Project (NOK3.8 million); Department of Food Science and Technology – New Building and Equipment (NOK17.2 million); Institute of Computer Science (NOK9.5 million); School of Education – Outreach Programme (NOK1.2 million); Education Research and Extension (NOK three million); Education Resource Centre (NOK0.8 million); Department of Botany – Herbarium (NOK4.2 million); Department of Geography – Meteorological Unit (NOK3.3 million).

This massive financial support was one way NORAD was systematically assisting the university to achieve the goals and objectives set out in its 2000 – 2005/2007 Strategic Plan. Every activity in the IDP was aligned to this plan and to the Government of Uganda development plans like the Poverty Eradication Programme (PEAP), the 1997 – 2003 Education Strategic Investment Plan and the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA). The Norwegian strong interest in supporting agriculture was because according to the 1996 statistics, Uganda derived forty five per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from agriculture, making it the largest economic sector. Besides contributing to food security, agriculture also served as the main source of income for the majority of Ugandans. Therefore, support to agricultural education and research was a high impact investment. Given this background, it did not come as a surprise that out of the NOK110 million, the Faculty of Agriculture with three projects in the IDP took thirty per cent of the grant, making it the largest single beneficiary of the NORAD support under the Institutional Development Programme (IDP). When combined with the closely related Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, including Nyabyeya Forestry College, the total share of the grant rose to almost forty eight percent. Interestingly, fifty two per cent of the grant to the Faculty of Agriculture went to the Department of Food Science and Technology, which was established with the sole purpose of value adding to the country's agricultural produce. About thirty six per cent of the rest of the grant to the Faculty of Agriculture went to Makerere University Agricultural Research institute, Kabanyolo (MUARIK) and the Continuing Agricultural Education Center (CAEC). Later, the Department of Food Science received an additional NOK four million from the unallocated funds to complete its new building,

bringing its total share of the grant to NOK twenty one million. Although I was too busy to find out that they appreciated the NORAD support, I am sure my colleagues in the two Faculties had good reason to smile and perhaps to be a little happy with their Vice Chancellor, who worked so hard to get the financial support.

The NORAD grant made it possible for the Department of Food Science and Technology to have a home of its own space in a new and modern building on top of the Observatory Hill, which my children used to call the “Bipipa Hill” because of the many water tanks located there. Dr Joyce Kikafunda, the Head of Department together with small a team of her staff, which included Drs Muhammad Serunjogi and William Kyamihangire, spent several hours with the architects, NORPLAN, meticulously designing and planning the building. Besides a building befitting the department, they wanted laboratories which could meet the ISO standards. Pilot plants, cold rooms, food processing facilities for research and teaching, low cost equipment for traditional food processing, dairy products’ (including yoghurt and ice cream) processing equipment, solar dryers, dehydration and extruders, and a lot more were also on the long list of their needs. Certainly, the list of the items, which the department submitted was much longer. I have just mentioned a few to give the reader an idea of the magnitude of the department’s needs. For years, the department had been looking for ways of acquiring new and modern equipment for teaching and research. It was also fast becoming a referral centre for the food and agro- processing industry, so it was in dire need of space and modern equipment. For a long time, Uganda’s Government did not have the resources to equip the young department.

In addition to the main teaching and research building, which also housed the departmental as well as staff offices, the architects managed to squeeze in a conference hall without over-stretching the tight budget. I later learnt that the architects had initially found it very hard to come up with a design that fitted into the small budget, but after a lot of effort they were able to come out with something. Construction commenced in 2003 after the Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda, Tore Gjos, cut the sod and laid the foundation stone at a colourful ceremony held on site. On April 6, 2005, the Ambassador commissioned this magnificent building, which stands majestically above the Faculty of Technology. However, shortly before I left the university in 2004, I had heard from the usual corridor talk that as soon as it moved into its new home, the department had plans to break away from the Faculty of Agriculture and transform into an autonomous Institute of Food Science and Technology. With a new and well-equipped facility, the department had reason to contemplate such a move, although I was sure it would not go down well with their Dean.

The IDP brought several spin-offs. For instance, after installing the MakLIBS, the University Library formalised a linkage with the University of Bergen with

the objective of facilitating an inter-library loan service. The service enabled both staff and students gain direct access to the University of Bergen rich library database online. The programme also facilitated Makerere University Library staff spending time at Bergen and the University of Bergen Library staff coming down to Makerere from time to time as part of the exchange programme between the two universities.

As far as I could recollect, Makerere University Library hardly had any professional linkages with libraries in other universities and therefore, hardly ever participated in exchange missions. The IDP changed all that. Besides the University Library, other NORAD grant beneficiary departments also explored and established collaborative linkages with other national and international institutions for purposes of training, research and outreach/extension services. For example, the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation started collaborating with the Agricultural University of Norway through NORAGRIC on a joint MSc degree in the Management of Natural Resources and Sustainable Agriculture. Students registered for the programme, including Norwegians, spent the third semester at Makerere, taught by Makerere staff. The tripartite PhD programme and staff exchange with Sokoine University in Tanzania and the Agricultural University of Norway were the other initiatives in which the new Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation participated. The School of Education and the Faculty of Agriculture were able to re-activate their outreach and extension services to various schools and institutions throughout the country. In short, the university was able to take full advantage of the Institutional Development Programme to improve its efficiency and effectiveness in a variety of ways and ensure that the registered improvements were not skin-deep, but could be sustained long after the NORAD support ended, and that they were also keeping with the changing national and international higher education environment. By the time I was leaving the university, we had initiated discussions with NORAD on the possibility of funding a second phase, IDP II. That included, among other things, further support to some of the ongoing projects which could not be completed or which were not allocated sufficient funding in the first phase, such as the ICT project and the Management Information Systems, as well as bringing in a few new ones like a building for the Faculty of Technology. Unfortunately, I was unable to conclude the negotiations before I retired. Before I left, I made a passionate plea with the Norwegian Embassy and Mr Kibirige Mayanja that, should phase two of the IDP be approved, a provision be made for a new building for the Faculty of Technology. This was despite the rumour I had heard that NORAD was thinking of putting an end to further infrastructure development.

Working closely with the NORAD staff at the Norwegian Embassy in Kampala and in Oslo was a truly rewarding experience for me. It was one of the crowning achievements of my Administration. In the same vain, I wish to pay special tribute

to Dr David Byatike Matovu, that wonderful chair of the University Council for two three-year consecutive terms, who put all his weight behind the Programme to ensure that it succeeded. To all colleagues, who were responsible for implementing and coordinating the IDP and did so professionally, in particular Mohammed Kibirige Mayanja – the Programme Coordinator – and his team of Matia Kabuye the Statistician, John Mangheni, Florence Nakayiwa, Paul Teefe the Programme Accountant and Florence Bwanga (who went on to register for a PhD), Bob Lyazi, James Kabatangaale the University Internal Auditor and the entire Programme Steering Committee. Ben Byambabazi, the University Bursar, deserves a special mention for his good financial management skills. We could account for every cent. My Personal Assistant, Mrs Euphemia Kalema Kiwuwa, did a fine job; always ensuring all the necessary documentation was done and the minutes of meetings were written and circulated. Jane Francis Nabawanuka, the University Legal Officer; Alex Muraari Muhwezi, Sam Wandeka and Hellen Kawesa, all of my office provided me with the essential administrative back-up, which was so critical to the success of the entire programme. The two Ambassadors I was privileged to work with, Ambassador Arild Oyen and his successor, Ambassador Tore Gjos, as well as the NORAD desk officers at the Embassy: Karl Solberg with whom we started it all, Harold Karlsens, Elisabeth Stribott and young Randi, who took over from Elisabeth; Mr Odero Obella, Patrick Ocailap and all staff in the AID Liaison Department of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for the annual tripartite meetings at the Ministry that ensured that the programme was well managed and the funds kept coming on time.

The NORAD Steering Committee, made of the various project leaders with Professor Livingstone Luboobi as alternate chair, essentially provided the programme with the right intellectual stimulus and stewardship.

### **The Norwegian Universities Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU)**

The Norwegian support to the university was not only through NORAD. Other Norwegian institutions were equally keenly interested in seeing Makerere regain its reputation as an outstanding African university, a status that was provisionally lost during the many years of political turmoil and economic hardship. In 1988, the Norwegian universities and colleges decided to set up the Norwegian Council of Universities Committee for Development Research and Education (NUFU). It was set up with the objective of promoting a programme of academic research and education cooperation between the Norwegian institutions and institutions in the South, based on equal partnership. In 1991, NUFU successfully negotiated and entered into a five-year agreement with the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to finance the international cooperation programme between universities and university colleges in Norway and developing countries. The cooperation

with the institutions in the South was based on four broad goals, namely: Long-term commitments and agreements between partner institutions; Equality in the partnerships between the Norwegian institutions and the institutions in the South; Setting priorities; and Identifying needs as defined by the institutions in the developing countries. This was the decentralised model for implementing and managing the cooperation programmes.

The main objective of the NUFU initiative was to contribute to the creation and enhancement of research capacity and competence at universities in the developing countries. To achieve its objectives, the NUFU focused on four types of activities. Joint research cooperation; education and training of researchers for Masters and PhD degrees; developing new degree programmes; and training of technical and administrative staff. In terms of research support, NUFU focused on Agriculture and Fisheries, Health and Medical Sciences, Mathematical and Natural Sciences, as well as Humanities. The Science took the lion's share of NUFU funding. Like NORAD, NUFU wanted to support projects that had the highest positive impact on society in the developing countries. It laid a lot of emphasis on training large numbers of doctoral students from the developing countries – mainly through joint sandwich type of training in which students would take part of their training in Norway and the other part in their home countries. Creating a viable and sustainable research environment in the developing countries was one of NUFU's priorities. A higher number of individual publications by researchers from the developing countries and joint publications with their Norwegian counterparts was also part of NUFU's agenda. It also wanted to see policy makers in developing countries use research-based knowledge in decision-making, as well as create right conditions for enhanced industrial production by utilising research results and outcomes from the cooperation programmes. It also encouraged creation of sustainable North-South-South collaboration and viable networks.

Makerere University started participating in the NUFU programmes in 1991 after a meeting held in Harare that year between the Norwegian universities and African universities from East and West Africa and Sudan. For its part, Makerere University was interested in capacity building in basic sciences, as well as Science and Technical Education; strengthening the Departments of Dentistry and Pharmacy respectively; support to the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as strengthening the new Departments of Architecture and Land Surveying in the Faculty of Technology. Fortunately, Makerere was one of the universities in Africa which received a favourable response from the NUFU Board. I strongly suspect Makerere struck it lucky because Dr Endre Lilethum, a Physics Professor at the University of Bergen had visited the university in 1987/88 and found the laboratories in the Physics and other science departments in a deplorable state. On returning to Norway, he made a passionate appeal for support on behalf of Makerere University. In response to Professor Lilethum's appeal, in May 1992,

Makerere University and the University of Bergen signed a general agreement of cooperation in Bergen and thus began a long and enduring cooperation between the two universities. Other Norwegian universities and university colleges signed on later. The conclusion and signing of the agreement of cooperation qualified the two institutions to start drawing funds from NUFU to implement a programme of agreed activities. The first phase of NUFU's support at Makerere ended in 1994. I was fortunate to have participated in the negotiations for the second phase in 1995. At the time Professor Senteza Kajubi and Bernard Onyango, who was then Academic Registrar embarked an ambitious academic staff development programme. NUFU provided the badly needed input in terms of research, as well as teaching material and equipment.

Makerere University benefited from the NUFU support in several ways, all vital components to its development. In the first instance, the programme enabled some of the young Assistant Lecturers, Graduate Fellows and Teaching Assistants who had one degree to obtain their Masters degrees at Makerere and in Norway. It also provided a window of opportunity for members of staff who had, for one reason or other, missed upgrading to PhD level to study for that degree, which in turn enhanced their research competence and opportunity for promotion. Thirdly, through NUFU, the university acquired vital research supplies and equipment. Researchers at Makerere had the opportunity to access and utilise the well-equipped laboratories of the Norwegian universities. Fourthly, Makerere University was host to some of the top Norwegian and non-Norwegian academics who taught and co-supervised research students registered at Makerere, Norway and elsewhere. Norwegian undergraduate and postgraduate students too were afforded the opportunity to take part of their training at Makerere and to undertake research in Uganda. Interestingly, most of the Norwegian students preferred to share rooms in the halls of residence with Ugandan students. Additionally, many publications in peer-reviewed journals came out of the joint research projects. All this helped to increase the profile of Makerere University as a credible African university, and no doubt played a significant role in its academic recovery.

Following the signing of another four-year agreement which came into effect in 1996, by the time I left, I recall that Makerere University was collaborating with the following Norwegian universities and colleges: The University of Bergen; the Norwegian University of Science and Technology – formerly the University of Trondheim – and the Norwegian Institute of Technology (or NTH as it was then called); Agricultural University of Norway at Aas; Oslo School of Architecture; Oslo Veterinary School; School of Mission and Theology based at Stavenger. The University of Bergen took the lion's share of projects with Makerere. Between 1996 and 2000, NUFU had committed up to NOK twenty three million, equivalent to US\$ three million dollar, of support to ten projects and programmes at Makerere. The university was implementing the projects in collaboration with

partner institutions in Norway. In fact, most of the NUFU funding went into supporting joint research projects. In 2001, we entered a new funding cycle with a few more projects coming on board and a few old ones dropped. One of the most interesting features about the NUFU cooperation was the powers NUFU gave to us to decide the kind of projects we wanted it to fund. However, we did this taking into consideration the interest of our partners in Norway. Makerere staff and their counterparts in Norway had to submit joint project proposals to a panel of evaluators at Makerere of which the Vice Chancellor was the chair. We had to rank all the proposals in order of merit and priority, and consequently submit a detailed report on each to the NUFU Board in Norway. On receiving our rankings, the NUFU board made the final decisions.

In a relatively short time the NUFU house in Garden Hill became a hive of activity and constant comings and goings. One of the projects I found very interesting was one submitted by Dr Yusuf Kizito of the Zoology Department at Makerere and Professor Peter Larson of the University of Bergen titled Nature, Society and Water. It was going into its second phase, but we almost failed to find money for it. Although its objectives were strongly relevant to the Ugandan situation, at the time the NUFU budget could not accommodate it. We had to search for funding for it from another source. It was the first NUFU-like projects to have benefited from the IDP grant as had been the agreed arrangement prior to the signing of the IDP grant agreement. Since at the time NUFU was not part of NORAD, we had to make a special case for us to use part of the unallocated NOK ten million IDP budget to fund it. NORAD granted the request.

### **Cooperation Between Makerere University and the University of Bergen – The First Experience in Joint Degree Awards and Credit Transfer**

As far as I could recollect, the idea of forging collaborative linkages with universities abroad dated back to the early 1980s when Professor Asavia Wandira tried, but with limited success, to initiate an academic linkage between Makerere University and Pavia University in Italy. Professor George Kirya picked up the idea and popularised it further. In the intervening years, Makerere University began to sign Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with universities and research institutions around the world. Some MoUs blossomed and translated into real action and successful relationships. Sadly, others remained just dry ink on paper or fell by the wayside. Without exaggeration and given the fact that neither institution had ever worked with the other before, the linkage between the University of Bergen and Makerere University was one of the most successful and enduring relationships Makerere University had ever had with a European University in recent years, and stands out loftily as an excellent example of successful academic collaboration. The initial contact with the University of Bergen began in 1988, but serious work activity started in 1992 with the signing of a five-year general agreement

of cooperation which expired in 1997. Fortunately, during this period, the scope of cooperation between the two institutions kept expanding. Within these first five years, four Centres and seven departments at the University of Bergen were actively involved in the cooperation with Makerere. At Makerere, two Faculties and six departments were participating in the joint programmes with Bergen. The NUFU-funded Basic Sciences for Technological Development project was one of the most successful joint activities undertaken by both universities in the first five years of cooperation. Based on what this project had achieved, the two universities decided to continue working together with more programmes added to the list of the joint activities. Besides NUFU, funding for the new projects was sought from other sources as well. The Norwegian Research Council agreed to fund the first phase of the Nature, Society and Water project on Lake Victoria. The University of Bergen too injected its own money into the project, including a new research boat with an outboard engine. Other interesting joint projects submitted to the Norwegian Research Council for funding included Light and Life in Lake Victoria and Aquaculture, Nutrition and Health in Developing Countries. As part of its commitment to the cooperation agreement, the University of Bergen agreed to co-finance the latter project during the planning phase. Biosystematics at Makerere University; Gender Studies; Integrated Management of Fresh Water Ecotones in Uganda; Women and Water and a Master of Science Degree in Integrated Management of Areas by Rivers and Lakes were some of the additional joint programmes on the growing list of new areas of cooperation at the time. As expected, Makerere's contribution to the projects was mainly in kind.

After an internal review of the cooperation a few years later, we mutually agreed that the cooperation had been a success and had benefited both partner institutions. As a follow up to this success story, we approved a proposal for the two universities to enter into a long-term agreement that ensured the sustainability of the cooperation for at least fifteen years. However, as an escape clause, we included a provision for evaluating the principal agreement document (or the strategic document as my colleagues at Bergen preferred to call it) every five years, and the annexes every three years. We also narrowed down the cooperation locus to four mutually agreed broad areas: Research Collaboration (joint research and teaching); Scientific Competence Building (exchange of information and publications); Staff and Student Exchange; and Institutional Development. We further emphasised the importance of integrating institutional development into all collaborative activities by encouraging staff at both universities to participate in the cooperation programme.

In November 1999, I had the honour of hosting a delegation from the University of Bergen, led by none other than the Rector herself, Professor Kirsti Koch Christensen. Incidentally, she was no stranger to Makerere. She told me she had visited the university before. On November 18, 1999 I sat down with her in

the Council Room in the Main Building and both of us appended our signatures to a fifteen-year Frame Agreement. Mrs Jamila Kamulegeya signed as witness for Makerere on behalf of Mr. Avitus Tibarimbasa, University Secretary, who was away at the time and Mr Kare Rommetveit, the Director General of the University of Bergen (the equivalent of the University Secretary in our system) signed as the second witness on behalf of the University of Bergen.

While the University of Bergen had appointed a full-time Makerere–Bergen liaison officer with a coordinating office at Bergen, we were yet to appoint one and identify a proper office for him. After the retirement of Professor Endre Lilethum, the University of Bergen appointed Professor Andrea Steigen, a zoologist as new coordinator. Professor Luboobi had been heading the Basic Sciences for Technological Development project for many years and had done a good job. We asked him whether he would be interested in coordinating the Makerere–Bergen cooperation programme on behalf of Makerere University. In effect, in that role, he acted as Professor Steigen's counterpart. He gladly accepted the responsibility, but needed an office and a small staff to assist him administer the programme. Fortunately, we were able to squeeze him in one of the flats at Lincoln House, which at the time was under renovation. The office would also double as a residence for the staff from Bergen. Andre Steigen and Livingstone Luboobi inspected about three flats after I had sought permission to enter and both settled on one of their choice. I signed it off to them and it became the Bergen–Makerere office. It was not long before serious activities began in earnest. One of the main responsibilities of the coordinator's office was to take care of the students from Bergen, who were at Makerere on the student exchange programme. The University of Bergen furnished the office and provided the coordinator with a brand new off-road vehicle for quick and convenient mobility.

Collaboration with the University of Bergen introduced a new and innovative feature at Makerere and took institutional collaboration to a new level. For example, student exchange was not restricted to the usual occasional student type. It was a much more serious affair. It involved, among other things, actual credit transfer and joint degree awards. As far as I could recall, this was the first time foreign students were taking full credit courses taught at Makerere and examined by Makerere staff, and carried the credits they earned to their home university, and such counted towards their total degree credit load. This was a totally new experience. Once again, we were witnessing history in the making. A new era of internalisation of higher education with the Global North was unfolding; one that promoted international networking, sharing of academic and socio-cultural experiences, and free mobility of students and staff among universities,

Under the Frame Agreement, both universities agreed to recognise credits earned from one another. Where there was substantial overlap between courses, there would be a deduction in the credits corresponding to the overlap. However,

it was a conditional requirement that the student's department at the home university had to accept the study programme offered at the host institution before departure. The arrangement included prior credit recognition. Furthermore, to avoid misuse of the student's study time at the host institution, the exchange students were required to maintain full-time enrolment during their stay. Their study programme abroad would be included in the study plan, which they would have followed at their home university as a requirement for the completion of their degree programme. However, a student was free to take additional courses at the host institution as long as there was good reason to believe that such courses would be of value to the student's experience on return to his or her home institution. Language and culture would be among such courses. Where tuition and boarding fees were applicable, they were paid direct to the host university. In addition, students had to certify on their application to Bergen or Makerere that they were in satisfactory academic standing.

In the pilot phase, joint awards were restricted to graduate degrees only, Masters or PhD, in a sandwich or joint research programme between the two universities. The requirements for the jointly awarded degrees were relatively simple and straightforward. There had to be a matching Masters degree at either university. Candidates had to fulfil the requirements of both universities for registration or graduation. Preferably, a candidate for the joint degree had to be a participant in an ongoing joint research project between the two universities. The challenge was how to operationalise these bold and innovative ideas the two universities had mutually agreed to undertake together. Because Makerere University had no policy on either credit transfer or joint degree awards, we found ourselves not ready to sign the Student Exchange and Joint Degrees Agreement yet, despite the fact that the Agreement was ready for signing in early 2003. It had to wait until the policy had been enacted and put in place. Although I could not hold back my enthusiasm for such innovative ideas, I soon realised that we were in uncharted waters and my time was fast running out, so we had to act quickly. I wanted the Agreement signed before I left the university. I had worked closely with my colleagues on this initiative and I wanted to leave when everything was finalised and ready for implementation. For me, working with colleagues at the University of Bergen had been a rich and rewarding experience, which culminated in the joint awards scheme, something we had never attempted before. So for all intents and purposes, I did not want to leave it half done. As we worked on this and other initiatives, I regularly visited Bergen and what I found most amusing was the constant talk about the weather. I had all along believed that it was only the English who always complained about their weather. It was interesting to discover that the Norwegians also constantly complained about the same thing. Every resident of the city of Bergen I met every time I was there was complaining about the terrible weather and the constant rain. That was one of my many interesting Bergen experiences I wanted to recount to the Rector next time she visited.

Fortunately, the policy on joint awards did not take us long to sort out. By July 2003, Senate had prepared a Policy Document on Joint Awards and was ready for the University Council to approve. In September that year, the University Council approved the policy. Interestingly, the impetus for such a policy had not only come from our collaboration with the University of Bergen, but also from a variety of other sources. In 2001, Makerere University Business School (MUBS) and the National University of Rwanda (NUR), proposed to start a Master of Business Administration degree, which they wanted to be a joint award between the NUR and Makerere University. While considering the proposal submitted by MUBS and NUR, it became clear that Makerere University had no policy on joint awards and Senate found itself in a tight corner. It had ended there until it came up again in 2003 under the University of Bergen–Makerere University collaboration. This time, Senate decided to set up an ad hoc five-member committee, chaired by Professor John Opuda Asibo who was then Director of the School of Postgraduate Studies, to evolve a policy on joint awards between Makerere University and other universities. Up until then, we had only sandwich programmes run jointly with other universities, but the students who were participating in them had to register at only one university, either Makerere or the partner university.

Admittedly, it was not a satisfactory arrangement. In fact, some of our partners had started complaining that it was unfair for a student to do a substantial part of his or her study or thesis work at their university and, at the end of it all, Makerere alone awarded the degree. They argued that such a partnership did not give due recognition to their contribution. Therefore, what they were looking for was fair recognition of each institution's contribution to the student's degree. A few of them saw the joint awards scheme as the answer. Senate had to take note of their complaints. Incidentally, before the Opuda-Asibo's committee submitted its report, there were some nagging questions being asked, to which we had to provide answers. For instance, some asked why Makerere University should get involved in joint awards. Was this not one way the university was surrendering its academic autonomy to other universities? I guess the reason why such questions were being asked was that the majority of universities are notoriously fearful of anything which is perceived as undermining their academic reputation. In effect, they were cautioning us that before we appended our logo on a certificate which bore a logo of another university, we should first assure ourselves that the partner university was academically at par with Makerere University. To allay the lingering fears, we had to assure the critics that by going into joint degree awards, Makerere University was not necessarily surrendering part of its academic autonomy to other universities. If anything in a world that was changing so fast, any initiative that was likely to enhance Makerere's academic standing in the world was certainly welcome. It was therefore time that Makerere University had a proper policy to govern the joint awards.

Following the recommendations of the Opuda-Asibo Committee, Senate gave a broad definition of a joint award as an award following jointly executed teaching, supervision and examination or all such multidisciplinary responsibilities between one or more departments at Makerere and other relevant and recognised universities. A joint award presupposed that collaboration or cooperation existed between the partner institutions, thus creating an enabling environment in which students and academic staff could willingly and mutually interact intellectually. According to Senate, joint awards served two purposes, namely to utilise related and relevant expertise towards a course, degree award or closely-related specialities; and to establish partnerships between different universities for mutual academic benefits. Senate also identified three major advantages of joint awards accruing to Makerere University. Firstly, inherent in the joint award programmes was an element of mutual learning, leading to a better understanding of each institution's comparative advantage, as well as its limitations. Secondly joint awards had the potential to strengthen and reinforce Makerere's capacity to undertake high quality research. It was also the view of Senate that joint awards would boost the university's international visibility.

The policy was comprehensive and required, as a first step, that the collaborating university for the purposes of a joint award be a recognised institution with the requisite facilities and expertise to manage, teach, supervise and examine students. In addition, the collaborating university must possess the research capacity commensurate with the level of the joint award. Ethical issues related to the award had to be taken into account and agreed as jointly acceptable by either university. Students and staff involved in the joint degree programmes had to be made aware of all procedures related to such awards. Likewise, the partnership between Makerere and the partner university had to be complementary and equal. The existence of a collaborative agreement between Makerere University and the collaborating partner university was an essential pre-requisite to any joint award scheme. The funding mechanisms had to be agreed on right from the beginning and included as a clause in the agreement of collaboration or memorandum of understanding. Any intellectual property arising out of research undertaken for purposes of a joint award belonged to the partner university where the research was done. However, the partner university had to work out how to share any accruing financial proceeds in a format acceptable to all partners, taking into account each university's rules and regulations on intellectual property. The admission requirements of Makerere University and the partner institution had to be equivalent, otherwise any modifications or new requirements had to be mutually agreed on. The duration of study and stay at each university was to be defined and prescribed as a requirement. Quality assurance instruments, as well as the examination regulations and procedures had also to be mutually agreed right at the outset of the programme. Makerere University and the partner university would issue academic transcripts on terms agreed in the memorandum

of understanding. On certificates, the policy stipulated that the name of the award must be in existence at either institution and the certificate had to bear both or all universities' logos side-by-side; a statement attributed to the awarding bodies in the partner universities; the title of the degree (with class where applicable) and the signatures of the relevant authorities at each university. A joint award candidate was free to attend graduation at each partner institution, but would receive the award at only one university. For arbitration and termination of cooperation, the policy required the appointment of an arbitrator.

In case of termination or withdrawal from the programme by any of the partners, the partner had to give a one-year's notice, which had to be mutually consented to. When for one reason or another the cooperation between the institutions had to be terminated, the students already registered would be assisted to complete their studies.

The new policy not only paved way for Makerere University to award degrees jointly with the University of Bergen, it also made it easy for the university to participate in joint award programmes with any other recognised institution around the world. Although we now had a policy and were ready to enter into collaboration with the University of Bergen, we doubted whether the experiment would work, for the simple reason that the two cooperating universities were located in totally different settings. Makerere was a university located in the Global South and Bergen was in the Global North. Would Makerere live up to the high expectations of the Norwegian students, especially in terms of facilities? The more I thought about it, the more I wondered whether we had not embarked on an expedition into the unknown and had got to a point of no return. We had to bite the bullet, after all we had been telling the world that Makerere was an international university with a proven track record of academic accomplishments, but which had taken a temporary nose-dive during Uganda's turbulent years. After years of hard work, it had sufficiently recovered from the ashes. Now was the time to put that rhetoric to test and pass it with flying colours.

By the time I retired, the experiment was still in its early days, but by all accounts, it seemed to be working to everyone's satisfaction. For instance, between the 2002/2003 and 2004/2005 academic years, about twenty undergraduate and eight graduate students, including one PhD student of the University of Bergen, had studied at Makerere for periods ranging from six weeks to two semesters on mutually agreed programmes. The only criticism I heard voiced by the Norwegian students was that some of our staff were always dictating notes instead of lecturing. I suppose the tendency to dictate notes was one of the legacies of times past when students had no access to textbooks and computers, and lecturers had to dictate lots of notes to make up for the unavailable textbooks. The criticism notwithstanding, I am tempted to believe that the collaboration with the University of Bergen also marked the beginning of re-internationalising Makerere

University. However, the memorandum of understanding on Joint Awards with the University of Bergen – (Frame Agreement between Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and University of Bergen, Bergen Norway, on Research Collaboration, Scientific Competence Building, Students and Staff Exchange and Institutional Development; Agreement on Joint Degrees) was concluded in November 2004 by my successor, Professor Livingstone Luboobi. Even before the agreement on joint awards was concluded, the relationship between Makerere and Bergen had been extremely productive. It assisted Makerere to strengthen its staff development. For instance, between 1991 and 2001, thirteen PhD and forty Makerere Masters candidates had obtained their degrees under this collaborative arrangement and the number was still growing. In 2002, the Faculty of Medicine began collaborating with the Medical School of the University of Bergen, thus becoming one of the latest additions to the list.

Sweden was my next port of call.

### **The Swedish International Agency for International Development and its Research Arm, SAREC (Sida/SAREC)**

#### ***Makerere and the Swedish Universities Cooperate in Research and Joint PhD Awards***

I am tempted to believe that during the dying years of the twenty-first century, which ushered in the new millennium, Makerere's lucky stars were positioned in the right Zodiac constellation. Not only was our relationship with the Norwegian universities blossoming, we were also attracting other partners and new opportunities. At about this time when we were about to conclude discussions with our partners at the University of Bergen on a new frame agreement and joint awards, Sida/SAREC informed us that some Swedish universities we were collaborating with were also interested in exploring the possibility of entering into a joint PhD programme with Makerere University. As I recall, this was the time we had started rolling out the Makerere University–Sida/SAREC bilateral research collaboration programme on the theme: Lake Victoria and Other Water Sources.

The research projects on health, urban waste management, socio-economic and political change, as well as technology and the environment in the Faculties of Medicine, Social Sciences, Technology and Agriculture were already underway and attracting postgraduate students, most of them on staff development. Right from the outset, Sida/SAREC had told us that it was interested in sponsoring long-term university collaboration between Uganda and Sweden, with the aim of strengthening postgraduate research, PhD supervision and training at several faculties, schools and institutes at Makerere University. Therefore, a joint awards programme was another dimension of its support to Makerere University.

When Sida/SAREC suggested that we go into joint PhD awards with some Swedish universities, our Medical School had started collaborating with the Karolinska Institute – a medical University in Stockholm and the home of the Noble Committee for Medicine or Physiology. Karolinska was ready to take the plunge, but our Medical School had a few problems to sort out. As we have seen elsewhere in this account, most members of staff in the Medical School were reluctant to register for the supervised PhD. Instead, they preferred their traditional and unsupervised Doctor of Medicine or MD degree which, according to their arguments, was more professionally oriented than the PhD. However, the link with the Karolinska Institute changed their mindset. Gradually, several members of staff came forward and registered in the joint PhD programme. However, Karolinska Institute was not satisfied with the old practice where only one institution in a joint graduate programme reserved the right to award the degree. They wanted a joint award and so we began the long process of formalising the joint awards arrangements. As I discovered later, it was not plain sailing for the Karolinska Institute either. The leadership of the Karolinska Institute found it tough sell to their staff and the Swedish Government because, like us, they too had never been involved in joint degree awards with other institutions, particularly in Africa. On a happy note, eventually they were able to convince both staff and Government that what they were proposing was a good idea which, in the long run, would be of benefit to both institutions.

In November 2003, in the company of the Director of the Postgraduate School, the University Bursar and other university officers, I made a short visit to Stockholm to conclude and sign the Joint PhD Award Agreement with the Rector of the Karolinska Institute. This was my second visit to Stockholm since the signing of agreement for the Sida/SAREC support to Makerere University, between the Government of Uganda and the Royal Government of Sweden. The historical signing ceremony took place in the prestigious Nobel Committee building. As I put pen to paper as did the Rector, Professor Hans Wigzell, on behalf of the Karolinska Institute, I could not help thinking that once again this was further proof that Makerere University was regaining its rightful position as a centre of academic excellence and a rightful member of the international community of universities.

The visit to Karolinska Institute had an added bonus. It happened to coincide with the Nobel Prize Awarding ceremony. It was indeed a rare opportunity for me and the colleagues who accompanied me to the prestigious ceremony, which was presided over by the King of Sweden. Rector Hans Wigzell had so kindly arranged it for us to witness the exclusive and colourful ceremony to which only a few are invited. Listening to the citations and acceptance speeches of the new laureates, and seeing them receive their laurels from the King was such a captivating experience. It was an occasion you do not forget so easily. It lives with

you for the rest of your life and, as a scientist, I could not help but indulge in some day-dreaming and regretting that if I had not abandon my science early for other things, perhaps I could have been one of them. With my paper in *Nature*, who knows!

The signing of the cooperation agreement in Stockholm formalised the joint awards arrangements between Makerere and the Karolinska Institute, but left out other Swedish universities we had entered into collaboration with. For those universities which were not participating in the joint PhD awards, the arrangement was for Makerere students to register at the collaborating Swedish University, but with two supervisors – one in Sweden and one at Makerere. Where it was possible and feasible, the student did the bulk of their PhD research work at Makerere. Some Swedish universities required the students to register for the Licentiate first before attempting the PhD. Initially, the idea of subjecting our students to what appeared to be another Masters degree when they already had one did not appeal to me. I had seen it as a waste of student's valuable time. It also reminded me of the old Makerere Licentiate in Medicine which, before the opening of the University of East Africa in 1963, was the only medical qualification the college awarded and that was long time ago. Why go back to the old and phased-out qualifications, moreover in Engineering? However, my second visit to Stockholm in November 2003 changed my pre-conceived notion about the Licentiate.

Besides the main signing ceremony at the Karolinska Institute, I also squeezed in a visit to the Royal Institute of Technology (or KTH as it is known by its Swedish acronym), located on the other side of the town. This was the main Swedish Engineering University which was collaborating with our Faculty of Technology. John Baptist Kirabira of the Department of Mechanical Engineering was part of the first batch of Makerere PhD students to register at KTH, with Dr Joseph Byaruhanga as his supervisor on the Makerere side. He had completed his Licentiate and was going to defend it. I had heard and read about the public thesis defence system in the Swedish universities against an opponent, but I had never witnessed one before. The Rector of KTH had requested me to attend Kirabira's public defence of his thesis, which was literally open to whoever was interested.

As I sat in the auditorium waiting for the dual to start, I felt nervous about the whole thing. In fact, it was a tense moment for me. I imagined Kirabira being tormented by some Swedish Nobel Laureate Professor as his opponent. Much as I had a lot of confidence in his intellectual prowess, I could not help sympathising with him. It must have been a tense moment for him too. The occasion reminded me of my PhD thesis defence some twenty-six years ago. However, my defence was different. It involved my supervisor, the external examiner and one other professor, moreover behind closed doors. This one was in effect open to a potentially unlimited number of examiners – the audience. Kirabira's opponent was a professor with an imposing frame from the University of Stockholm. It was one of the few

Swedish universities Makerere had no links with. I also learnt something new. In the Swedish system, a thesis is a collection of academic papers on the candidate's area of study. Each chapter in the thesis is composed of a series of published papers or papers due for publication. The opponent picks questions from every part of the thesis and the candidate has to answer them before an attentive audience. Like the rest of us, Kirabira's two supervisors were just part of the audience, literally onlookers. Kirabira was sweating it alone. As is their practice, towards the end of the dual, the opponent is free to ask if the audience has a question to put to the candidate. It was a tense, but fascinating process to watch. John Kirabira easily outwitted his opponent and passed the defence with what I thought were flying colours. I do not recall him failing to answer any of his opponent's questions. In fact, his opponent was full of praises for him congratulated him on his good research and outstanding performance.

Although I never considered race as an issue in matters of intellectual ability, nevertheless I found it a rewarding experience seeing John Kirabira, an African student trained as an engineer in an African-based university, stand before a predominantly white audience and perform so well. Much as it was not a PhD, his outstanding performance was a source of pride for me as his Vice Chancellor. The Licentiate was a step towards the PhD, which he also defended and passed less than two years later. The Licentiate defence was a sort of a dress rehearsal for the real thing. His supervisors were all smiles too for a job well done. His research on Ugandan clays showed that Uganda had high-grade furnace refractory clays. Later as we took a walk through his department and School, I noticed several students looking intently at a piece of paper pinned up on the billboard. Kirabira told us that indeed the students were looking at their test grades which had just been pasted up, adding that the reason why the students looked anxious was because it was common at KTH for students to fail their tests. He narrated how the Swedish students were amazed at his ability to pass those tests, and pass well too. As we continued the tour of the School, I was happy to meet more Makerere students from different departments of the Faculty of Technology, who had followed Kirabira at the KTH and were doing well. I must admit that before my visit there, KTH was one of the Swedish universities I knew very little about, just as I used to think that there was only one university in the city of Uppsala – the old and famous University of Uppsala, founded in the fifteenth century. It was not until the Faculty of Agriculture linked up with the Agricultural University of Sweden (LSV), located on the outskirts of the same city, that I realised that Uppsala had two separate universities. The Agricultural University of Sweden, like the University of California, is a system with several campuses with its headquarters in Ultuna near Uppsala.

After a series of very productive meetings at the Karolinska Institute and in her laboratory at the same institute during my first visits to Sweden in the summer of

2001, Dr Hannah Akuffo proposed that I should go with her to the Agriculture University at Uppsala to meet with the Rector. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the modalities of the collaboration which the two universities had entered into, but the details of which the Rector and I had not had the occasion to discuss one-on-one. I was anxious to finalise with him what should go into the final print of the memorandum of understanding. We drove to Uppsala on a rather rainy day, but the occasion provided us with an opportunity to see the beauty of that part of Sweden in summer.

I was pleasantly surprised to be welcomed by Dr Annakbong, a Ugandan, who told me that he hailed from Mukono. He had been with the LSV for several years and was already well established there as part of the academic staff of the university. I believe by then he was at the rank of Associate Professor. Later, as part of the Sida/SAREC project linking the two universities, Dr Annakbong became a frequent visitor to the Faculty of Agriculture at Makerere. When he visited Makerere again in January 2004 to attend the second Donors' Conference, he had just been promoted to the coveted rank of full Professor at the same university. We were all happy for him. He was proving that, given the chance, Ugandans can make it anywhere in the world. As one of the Sida/SAREC senior researchers at Makerere, Professor Elly Sabiiti of the Department of Crop Science and Dean of Agriculture was one of his links at Makerere. At the time, Professor Sabiiti had developed an interesting research project he was implementing with his counterparts at LSV, which involved innovative ways of converting the heaps of Kampala's garbage into fertiliser for peri-urban agriculture. In fact, in one of the meetings held at Fairway Hotel in Kampala, the participants proposed that on his next visit to LSV, Professor Sabiiti should go along with Sebaana Kizito, Kampala's Mayor, for him to see at first-hand how the city of Uppsala handles solid waste disposal and management. Unfortunately, the invitation to the Mayor never materialised.

The meetings of postgraduate research students and their supervisors, both at Makerere and at the partner Swedish universities, which used to be held at Makerere annually, was one of the means of assessing the progress of project implementation in each of the four participating Faculties and the School of Postgraduate Studies. I must say that when it came to these meetings, Dr Hannah Akuffo was very diligent. She always attended them in person. Secondly, and as with NORAD, one of the clauses in the cooperation agreement between Sida/SAREC and Makerere University was the mandatory annual tripartite meeting between the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Makerere University and Sida/SAREC. The purpose was to review the progress the entire project had made in the course of the year and approve the budget and work plan for the following year. Initially we used to hold two separate meetings at different times, one with NORAD and another with Sida/SAREC. In 2003 however, the two agencies together with us agreed to have one combined annual meeting. It was interesting to see the two

Scandinavian neighbours sit together at the same table with us, but it worked out beautifully. The good preparatory work of Kibirige Mayanja and his team in the Planning and Development Department, the well-written progress report and the positive Auditor General's statement on the projects' audited accounts, coupled with the efficient way Mr Obela of the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (or Mr Patrick Ocailap in his absence) chaired the meetings, we always left the meeting satisfied that on balance, the projects were proceeding well. In total, the Sida/SAREC support to Makerere University for the period 2000 – 2004 amounted to ninety eight million Swedish Kronners, which is equivalent to about US\$ ten Million at the time.

This was indeed a big boost to our research effort and postgraduate training. This research grant was additional to the funding the University Library and ICT channelled through the DICTS. Shortly before I retired, we had begun preliminary discussions on the possibility of a second phase. Since my time was up, I had to leave it to my successor to conclude the negotiations with Sida/SAREC and close the deal. In my final interactions with them, some Sida officials had indicated that if we could provide a new facility, Sida would give favourable consideration to a request from Makerere to re-equip the Faculty of Technology. There was even a proposal for a soft loan to finance the construction of the building. Unfortunately, it was too late for me to conclude those discussions. I just prayed that NORAD would provide the funds for a building for the Faculty of Technology in the second phase of the Institutional Development Programme.

### **The Carnegie Corporation of New York**

In 1911, the American steel mogul, Andrew Carnegie, set up and endowed a philanthropic foundation which interestingly, but contrary to the norm, he decided to call a Corporation; the Carnegie Corporation of New York. He acted as its first and founding president; a position he held until 1919. Andrew Carnegie set up the Corporation to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of United States. It was one of Carnegie's greatest endowments and the only one he established as a grant-making foundation. According to his will, the grants were to benefit primarily people of the United States of America, although up to seven per cent of the funds could be used for the benefits of the people of other countries that were or had been British overseas territories and the commonwealth, in particular sub-Saharan Africa.

According to available records, the Corporation indeed lived up to Andrew Carnegie's wishes at Makerere when Uganda was still under British rule. For example, the college received the Corporation's first grant amounting to £1,350 in 1943 to buy badly-needed textbooks, followed with a donation of a complete Library of Congress catalogue to the College Library in 1953. In 1955, the

Corporation made two more grants, one amounting to £28,720, which was used partly to fund the employment of extra staff for the College Library, an extra mural studies resident tutor based in Kenya, and partly for a Public Administration course developer. Another grant totalling US\$50,000 was made to the East African Institute of Social Research in the same year. Certainly, it would be an understatement to describe it as simply a big grant; it was an enormous sum going to a single unit.

In 1971, the National Institute became the second academic unit at Makerere to benefit from a Carnegie Corporation grant, amounting to US\$300,000. Sadly, that would also be the last grant the Corporation made to Makerere and Uganda until 1993, some twenty-two years later. Like most American-based foundations which either withdrew support, or scaled down their support to the university altogether in those difficult years, the Carnegie Corporation too stopped making grants to Makerere as a result of the unfavourable political environment that existed at the time. In 1993, long after the political dust, which had been responsible for much of the instability in the country, had settled down; the Corporation resumed its operations in Uganda with a modest grant to Makerere University to organise a conference on Social and Economic Development in Uganda.

In 1997, discussions began and culminated in the signing of the first three-year memorandum of understanding between the Corporation and Makerere University. In 1998, the Corporation began to disburse the grant to the university. However, the real big breakthrough came in the year 2000 when Dr Vartan Gregorian, the Corporation's twelfth President, paid a special visit to Makerere. At the time of his visit, we were in the process of drafting a new and comprehensive five-year (2000-2005) University Strategic Plan. However, when we embarked on this exercise, neither the Government of Uganda nor the university had enough money to enable us carry through the entire planning process. We soon realised that without additional funding, we could not complete the exercise, so as usual we turned to our donors. The Carnegie Corporation responded with a US\$72,000 grant. Besides supporting the university-wide planning process, the Corporation provided an additional grant of US\$50,000 in the same year, which assisted twenty-five faculties and administrative units to develop their micro-strategic plans, based on the main plan. The idea was to move away from over-centralised planning to assist the lower university units like departments become the main planning centres.

As far as I can recall, the resumption of the Carnegie Corporation support to Makerere began as a low-key affair, with the exploratory discussions we had with Professor Narciso Matos and other Corporation's officials, including Ms Andrea Johnson, a regular visitor to Makerere, and others. These discussions started in the late 1990s, but quickly picked up. Professor Matos and I were not strangers. I

had known him before when he was Rector of the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, and subsequently as Secretary General of the Association of African Universities (AAU) based in Accra, Ghana. He had moved over to New York and was now the chairman of the international programmes at the Corporation. Those discussions were very productive. They laid the ground work for a much larger grant the Carnegie Corporation had ever made to Makerere University. President Gregorian's brief, but notable visit to Makerere University in 2000 was a further testimony to the long lost, but newly found friendship between the Carnegie Corporation and Makerere University, and in a way served to reinforce the Corporation's new commitment to Makerere.

Dr Gregorian came with Prof Matos on his maiden visit to Makerere to inform us that the Carnegie Corporation had gone into partnership with the Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation, and had launched a broad programme of support aimed at strengthening Africa's higher education, called Partnership for African Higher Education. Based on its record of accomplishments, Makerere University had qualified as one of the first universities in Africa and Asia earmarked to benefit from the first US\$100 million grant. The launch of the grant was a big event held in New York in 2002, which I was expected to attend. However, due to my many pressing commitments, I requested Professor Epelu Opio to represent me and the university at the launching ceremony.

I had long learnt from experience that the best way to manage a big grant was through a steering committee made up of representatives of the beneficiary units. It guaranteed ownership and involvement, transparency and accountability. The Sida/SAREC grant had been the exception to this practice because of its nature. But like Sida/SAREC, research and research management, which was under the School of Postgraduate Studies was one of the Carnegie Corporation's primary focus. The Carnegie grant was somewhat different from other grants and this called for the setting up of a good steering committee to provide proper oversight.

The grant covered many unrelated components which required good coordination. In the subsequent discussions with Professor Matos, it happened that in addition to the overall institutional development programme, which was part of the Strategic Plan, the Corporation wished to channel most of its financial support to just three broad areas. The areas of interest to the Corporation were the Female Scholarship Initiative (FSI), which was basically a scholarship fund for fee paying female students from disadvantaged backgrounds; ICT development, including automation in the University Library system; and support to the science laboratories. We were assured that within these broad areas, several teaching and non-teaching departments stood to benefit from the Corporation's support. That said and done, it took us a while to agree on the list of beneficiary units. At

the end, we narrowed the list down to about ten units, namely the School of Postgraduate Studies, the University Library Service, Department of Women and Gender Studies, Faculty of Agriculture, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Technology, Department of Distance Education in the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education, Planning and Development Department and the Gender Mainstreaming Division in the Academic Registrar's Department. Although the original Committee had a membership of seven, including Professor Livingstone Luboobi who succeeded me as Vice Chancellor, in its wisdom, the Committee decided to co-opt four more members to ensure that it was representative of all beneficiary units. As Vice Chancellor, I served briefly as its chair. Now the practice was that the Director of Planning served as the grant coordinator and secretary to the Steering Committee. However, after the initial formalities of securing University Council approval for establishing the Committee, it was agreed that the Vice Chancellor was too busy and involved in too many things to continue chairing the Steering Committee; someone else had to do it. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor could have chaired it, but the consensus of the Committee members was that one of them should serve as chair and report directly to the Vice Chancellor. By consensus, the responsibility fell on the shoulders of Professor Nelson Sewankambo, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine. At first, he was reluctant to take on the additional responsibility as he already had many other commitments, but with a bit of persuasion he accepted to become the Committee's chair.

Besides the main Steering Committee, the FSI had its own Committee, with Professor Ruth Mukama as its chair. The FSI Committee had the daunting task of identifying the bona fide needy students who deserved the scholarships, and administering the three-year US\$1.5 million fund. As usual, suddenly every private female student became needy. According to the terms of the grant agreement, seventy five percent of the scholarships had to go to students enrolled in science-based disciplines. The aim was to encourage more females to go into these disciplines where they were grossly under-represented. Only thirty per cent was reserved for students in the humanities. The competition for the scholarships was extremely intense, thus putting the FSI Committee members under enormous pressure. For instance, when the scheme was first launched in the academic year 2001/2002, the Committee received 450 applications. Out of those many applicants, the Committee selected only ninety nine for the scholarships – sixty Science and thirty nine Humanities. It was an arduous task to sort out the really needy from the greedy. Although from a distance, I was experiencing the pressure too. People approached me to lobby for their children to secure a Carnegie scholarship. A clear and transparent selection criterion went a long way to ensure that the Committee always selected the genuinely deserving applicants and maintained good balance between the sciences and the humanities. The FSI was actually a landmark in the university's history. Makerere was not

in the habit of awarding scholarships to its students, save for the state sponsored performance-based scholarship scheme. The practice was that students paid fees to the university and not the other way round. The FSI scholarships were quite generous and covered practically every needy student's academic need, but there was a catch. To qualify for the award of the scholarship, the applicant must have secured admission to Makerere University under the private student scheme. In addition, the scholarship holder had to maintain satisfactory academic progress for the duration of the scholarship. Students who performed poorly therefore stood to lose their scholarships. Initially we had anticipated supporting a small number of students, but the Committee managed to stretch the funds and squeezed in many more eligible students than the original figure. By 2004, 353 females had received the scholarships, out of which sixty five per cent of the recipients were studying in Science and Technology.

Although I was not able to access and reconcile all the accounts and therefore, the figures I am quoting may be only approximations, nevertheless, they give one a sense of the extent of the Carnegie Corporation's support to Makerere University during the first five years when I was Vice Chancellor. Under the three-year institutional development programme, which became effective in 2000, the Department of Distance Education at the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education received US\$304,000 to develop a Distance Education Bachelor of Science degree programme in conjunction with the Faculty of Science. The School of Postgraduate Studies received US\$390,000 towards research support. An amount of US\$55,000 went to the Planning and Development Department to undertake two important studies. One was a tracer study to assess the employability and the effectiveness of Makerere University graduates, as well as the employment opportunities open to them in the labour market. The second study was an analysis of the consequences of student expansion on the maintenance of adequate academic standards at Makerere University.

The Academic Registrar's Department received up to US\$600,000 to establish a Gender Mainstreaming Division. By the time I left the university, we had sought an additional US\$200,000 as assistance to the same department to develop a full-fledged semester system and institute quality assurance. US\$650,000 went to the University Library to develop scientific library resources. The Faculty of Agriculture was the recipient of a US\$196,000 grant to work in conjunction with the Gender Mainstreaming Division of the Department of the Academic Registrar to develop institutional capacity for faculty-wide gender mainstreaming and provide scholarships to females admitted to the Department of Agricultural Extension Education under the Diploma Entrance Scheme. The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine received US\$206,000 from the institutional development programme supported by the Corporation to strengthen the undergraduate practical training programme. The Faculty of Medicine had an interesting project – Building Capacity for Social Responsibility to the Slum Communities around

the Makerere University. I am not so sure how much impact the project had on improving the ambivalent relationship between the slum dwellers who were living on the edge and the relatively well-off university community. We in the university always looked at all the slums around us as an eye sore. Admittedly, at first I was sceptical about what practical value and tangible outcomes would come out of such a project and how they would translate into action. Although I was not terribly keen on this project, nevertheless, being the first project of its kind from the Faculty of Medicine which was specifically focusing on community engagement, it captured our attention and was recommended for funding. An additional US\$178,000 went towards developing a new undergraduate programme in Valuation and Quantity Surveying in the Faculty of Technology. This was on top of the US\$200,000 towards the development of the laboratories in the same faculty and in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine respectively.

Besides those I have mentioned, the Carnegie Corporation supported several other initiatives at Makerere during my time. It is almost impossible to do full justice to all of them. Nevertheless, there are a few which stand out and are still a vivid memory. When Dr Vartan Gregorian visited the university in 2000, I took him on a tour of the various beneficiary units of the Carnegie Corporation grants. Agriculture was one of the Faculties he visited and while there, we met a young lecturer teaching a class in a small lecture room. Unfortunately, the black chalkboard he was using had faded, making it almost impossible to see what he was writing. Dr Gregorian was visibly amazed. He asked me why we could not provide professors with decent chalkboards. The question caught me off-guard and I fumbled to give him an answer. I gave a lame excuse that we had not been informed of this particular problem. Frankly, I was also taken aback by the sorry state of that chalkboard.

This was one of the manifestations of the chronic under-funding, which I used to cry about in my speeches at every graduation ceremony, but which had seemed to fall on deaf ears. We could not even take care of simple things like this, for lack of funding. The episode was really an embarrassment to me. When we returned to my office after the tour, Dr Gregorian told me that he had decided to give me a token grant of some US\$10,000 to replace the old and worn-out chalkboards in the university. He called it his Christmas present to Makerere University. I was extremely grateful, but wondered whether it would be enough to replace all the worn-out chalkboards in the university. When we did the count to determine how many chalkboards needed replacing and costed them, the figure was staggering, far in excess of the President's gift of US\$10,000. We had no choice, but to scale down the list of what we could replace. I must say that my friend Kibirige Mayanja, who was coordinating the exercise, had a hard time sorting out and selecting the worst-off departments. As a result of delays on our part, the money from New York came long after the Christmas of 2000. In fact, Dr Gregorian's Christmas gift came in August 2002. The trouble was that times

had changed, and most members of staff preferred the whiteboards which used markers. However, markers dry up very easily when left uncovered for sometime, which meant they had to be replaced regularly. We respected their choice and left the University Bursar to struggle with that recurrent expenditure. Fortunately, the Carnegie Corporation provided the initial batch of markers and erasers.

As I have said before, both Professor Matos and Ms Andrea Johnson had become regular visitors at Makerere. Andrea's regular visits to the university reminded me of another embarrassing incident. One day, I was returning from Dar es Salaam on an Air Tanzania flight. The flight took us from Dar es Salaam to Kilimanjaro then to Kigali before we landed at Entebbe. Andrea Johnson was also on that same flight with me, coming to Makerere to see me and other colleagues she was working with on the projects. What made the incident more embarrassing for me was the fact that both of us were seated in the same compartment of the aircraft. During a stop-over at Kigali, I decided to take a stroll along the aisle of the aircraft and here was a young white lady, who happened to be Andrea Johnson, seated in front of me. I went past her and came back to my seat without recognising her. I am sure she too was at a loss as to whether the person she was looking at pacing up and down the aisle was the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University she was coming to see or my double. I was tempted to think that way because she too made no effort to talk to me. When I arrived back at the university, my secretary told me that Ms Johnson from the Carnegie Corporation had made an appointment to see me the following day. When she was ushered in, I immediately recognised her as the person I had met on the flight from Dar es Salaam. I was embarrassed and all I could do was to offer an apology of an absent-minded professor. What made matters worse, was the fact that she and I had met more than once before, but as Professor Epelu Opio would put it, *Bibaawo*, meaning that such incidents do happen. It was a stark reminder that age was fast catching up with me. Fortunately, for both of us, the end of our meeting was a happy one. She had come to check on the progress of the various projects to make sure that all was well. Certainly, the Carnegie Corporation was one of our strongest development partners and an incredibly generous institution. Working with Dr Gregorian and his team of professionals was part of my many cherished happy memories at Makerere. I am grateful to those who made it possible for me to be a party to this incredible experience in the reconstruction of our university with the Carnegie Corporation's support and to have worked so well with an organisation I had never had much contact with before. I pay tribute to all the colleagues I worked with on this gigantic programme.

I want to end this wonderful story on an interesting note. Shortly before I stepped down as Vice Chancellor, we had begun some discussions on the possibility of another round of support. The Corporation had neither ruled it in nor ruled it out. Since my time was up, I had to leave the serious discussions to my successors.

## The Gatsby Charitable Foundation

### *Supporting the Uganda Gatsby Trust; Linking the Faculty of Technology with the Small Scale Enterprises and the Katwe Engineers*

Although Uganda and Britain have a relatively long history between them, as far as I am aware, few British charities have extended the same level of support to Makerere at the scale of the American Foundations. Much of the British assistance to the university has come from Government and its various agencies, notably the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), which later became the Department for International Development (DfID). Therefore, it came as a surprise when, in 1994, Professor George Kirya, then Uganda's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, sent news that he knew of a British charitable organisation which was interested in supporting small-scale and medium-scale industrialists in Africa, and Uganda was one of the promising countries in Africa the charity wished to assist. He thought that Makerere would make an ideal partner. He had sent the same information to Dr James Higenyi, who was then Dean of the Faculty of Technology, ensuring that if I did not respond, at least James Higenyi would keep reminding me. Professor Kirya was referring to the Gatsby Charitable Foundation (GCF), founded by Lord Sainsbury of the Sainsbury Supermarket chain.

I was familiar with the Sainsbury Supermarket, but I had never heard of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation before. I was not even sure the British had big philanthropic foundations like the Americans. One interesting thing I knew about the British people was that, as individuals, they are very generous people. As for their foundations, I hardly knew of any, so this was a new experience. I soon learnt that Lord Sainsbury's family started out as small-scale business – the corner grocery you ran to on a Wednesday afternoon when all the big shops everywhere were closed and you had forgotten to stock up for that half day. What I also learnt was that from those humble beginnings, their business had grown in leaps and bounds to become one of Britain's success stories.

Lord Sainbury thought he could make a contribution to Africa by giving a push to the struggling African small and medium-scale enterprises (SMSE). James Higenyi was quick to see the enormous potential in working with the GCF and soon we were exploring ways to make it happen. Once again, we found ourselves sailing in uncharted waters. Besides Uganda, the GCF had interest in Kenya, Tanzania and Cameroon. The Trust concentrated on a few countries, I guess because they did not want to spread out too thinly and overstretch the resources without making an impact. Surprisingly, Uganda was the only country where the Trust decided to work with a university, and for that matter, Makerere University. In the other three countries, they set up Gatsby Trusts which worked as NGOs, outside of the universities. I later learnt that one of the reasons the Gatsby Charitable Foundation liked working with Makerere was that, among other positive factors,

they found our decision-making process good and progressive. Experienced Ugandans were involved in selecting the beneficiaries and how the grants would be used. Secondly, we were able to quickly identify entrepreneurs and enterprises which had the potential to succeed. The main objective of the GCF support to this sector was to improve product quality and business acumen in order to make this sector of Uganda's economy more competitive. It was also intended to raise the productivity of the small-scale enterprises and the informal sector as a whole. The logic was that with increased productivity and competitiveness, the SMSEs would be able to create more employment opportunities for the unemployed and possibly the under-employed too.

Through the Uganda Gatsby Trust (UGT), which was set up with funding from the GCF of UK, the Faculty of Technology at Makerere was able to link directly with the small and medium scale industries dotted all over the county and provide them the necessary technical expertise.

It seemed that Lord Sainsbury's vision for Africa stemmed from the realisation that, perhaps with the exception of South Africa, Africa did not have many large industries. Most of the few that existed were declining, largely due to insufficient foreign exchange to import spare parts or to purchase new and modern machinery. Because of this apparent vacuum, coupled with lack of employment in the formal sectors of the economy, Africa was experiencing a rapid growth of small-scale industries, credited for sustaining some of the large-scale industries through the provision of homemade spare parts and machine modification. In the case of Uganda, Katwe Township, a suburb of Kampala on the way to Entebbe International Airport, with prominent entrepreneurs like late Musa Body, is home of such industries. In fact, the presence of so many locally owned fabrication workshops and small factories made the town famous and a household name throughout the country.

Countrywide, the range and categories of the small-scale industries is almost unlimited. They specialise in food processing, textiles and fashion design, electrical motor and transformer rewinding, carpentry and joinery, brick making, metalwork and fabrication; just to give the reader a glimpse of the range of things they can do. The young men and women are hardworking and it seems nothing can deter these enterprising Ugandans from setting up shops anywhere they think their products can attract buyers, regardless of the elements. They are found toiling away in the open, bathed in hot African sun, hence the name *Jua Kali* in Kiswahili, meaning "hot sun". A survey of these small-scale enterprises had shown that, like a free falling body which keeps accelerating until it reaches the terminal velocity and cannot accelerate further, the majority of the SMSEs had also reached their terminal velocity, a limit beyond which they could not grow any further. One could attribute the problems to a few, but critical constraints. The key constraints identified in the survey included low skills and limited technical expertise, low

product design capacity, low product quality, under-capitalisation and absence of research and development to generate new products, to upgrade the existing product lines or to improve product quality. This was not surprising since the majority of the craftsmen and women, branded “Katwe Engineers”, are employed in the small-scale industries and are self-taught or learnt the trade from an experienced craftsman. Besides the technical expertise, most proprietors of these industries lacked the skills and know-how to write good business plans to attract venture capital or access loans from the financial institutions. It was clear from the data collected that these constraints had translated into low value products, which had limited upper market appeal, making the sector marginally profitable. High quality products would certainly command a higher premium and that was what they needed. But for the sector to be able to perform at peak efficiency, management and good supervisory skills had to be boosted too. This was our entry point in the world of Katwe engineers.

Uganda Gatsby Trust and Makerere Faculty of Technology were not the first to get involved with the small and medium-scale enterprises in the country. The nation-wide small-scale enterprise association, the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSIA) based at Nakawa is one of them. Our intervention in the sector was to supplement and augment these efforts. Having identified the problems, our primary aim was to infuse a dose of professional engineering and business expertise into a sector that was providing livelihood to thousands of Ugandans, in order to improve its performance and in the process, facilitate its growth and expansion with improved product lines, as well as adding new and high value ones. The second objective was to assist the owners of these enterprises improve the profitability of their businesses through sound management practices and good record keeping, well written business plans and access to capital. Our intervention and aspiration to link with the small-scale entrepreneurs was the realisation that the public sector had been steadily shrinking over the years, and the capacity of the formal private sector to employ the entire Uganda’s workforce was very limited. The alternative source of employment for vast majority of people, particularly the young, lay in the informal sector of which the small-scale industries were an integral part. Therefore, as a public university, we had a responsibility to contribute to the economic viability of the small-scale and medium-sized industries. That is how the Uganda Gatsby Trust came into being in 1995, to address this specific need.

I have described elsewhere how the Faculty of Technology teamed up with the Katwe engineers, other small-scale industrialists throughout the country, the challenges and mindset they had to overcome and some of the success stories. Here, I want to focus on the Uganda Gatsby Trust and how it helped the Faculty of Technology make a significant contribution to the growth and development of the small-scale enterprises in Uganda. One of the GCF grant requirements called for the setting up of a local Gatsby Trust as a non-governmental organisation,

legally registered with the NGO Board and not in any way tied to the university's bureaucracy. To meet this requirement, we set up the Uganda Gatsby Trust (UGT). It had its own Board of Directors with three permanent trustees. The rest of the trustees on the Board were appointed on a three-year rotation basis. As far as possible, we had to ensure that the local Trust ran as an independent unit within the Faculty of Technology, with one member of staff of the faculty designated as its General Manager. Although Lord Sainsbury never made it to Uganda during my time, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation had an effective representation on the UGT Board. It was always a pleasure to have Lawrence Cockroft around, particularly during the critical Board meetings. Lawrence Cockroft, who represented the GCF on the UGT Board and the Vice Chancellor were the first two permanent UGT trustees. Later, Dr William Kalema joined the Board as the third permanent trustee and chair of the Board. The rest of the trustees served a term of three years. Dr Joseph Byaruhanga, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical Engineering accepted the role of General Manager. The job of the General Manager was demanding. It involved a lot of paperwork, travelling, attending meetings and meeting various kinds of people and much of the learning was on the job. However, up to the time I retired from the Trust in 2004, Dr Joseph Byaruhanga and his team had performed to the Board's satisfaction. One thing I quickly learnt about Dr Kalema, the Board chairman, was that he hated mediocrity and getting a nod of approval from him was as rare as the flowers of an African yam. However, from time to time, Joseph Byaruhanga used to get a pat on the back from him and that was re-assuring that the General Manager was delivering.

The Vice Chancellor was expected to chair the Board, but later that changed. The trustees thought that it was a better option to have a person with an industrial experience or financial background as chair of the Board, with the Vice Chancellor remaining in the role of permanent trustee. Mr Butler, who was then Managing Director of Standard Chartered Bank, served as chair of the Board for a while until he left the country in 2000. He was succeeded by Mr Kettle, Managing Director of the British American Tobacco Company until he too retired and left the country a few years later. The first few years saw a rather high turnover of chairpersons in quick succession, until Dr William Kalema accepted to take on the responsibility. Since the Faculty of Technology was the home for the UGT, the Dean of Technology was a non-permanent trustee and a member of the Board. To ensure a proper link between UGT with USSIA and their complimentary roles, Mr Kawoya, as well as a representative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry responsible for the small-scale industrial sector were invited to serve as non-permanent trustees of the Board. During the first few years of the UGT, Professor Roger Baker of the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College, London served as a trustee, representing the Gatsby Charitable Foundation in London. From time to time, Mr M. A. Pattison, the Director of the GCF in London and other CGF

officers came for the Board meetings. I used to enjoy the Board meetings in one of the cramped offices in the Department of Architecture and to witness how one of our best outreach programmes was contributing to solving some of our social problems. Later we shifted the meetings to the small boardroom next to the Dean's office. It was interesting to invite Mrs Irene Mutumba to join the Board as a non-permanent trustee, which she accepted. She had a good reputation and experience in micro-finance. Mr Geoffrey Bikwatsizehi, one of the successful small-scale entrepreneurs in Mbarara represented the Gatsby clubs. Dr Frank Sebbowa, a former member of staff in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, but now the Managing Director of Uganda Clays Limited at Kajjansi, was the latest non-permanent trustee and member of the Board before I left.

The Board agreed that UGT would harness the technical and professional resources existing in the Faculty of Technology at Makerere before looking outside. It also agreed on the mission of the Uganda Gatsby Trust, which was to develop the technological base of the small-scale enterprise (SSE) sector in Uganda and to enable it to grow. The Trust had three main objectives: To develop a network of small enterprises and link them to the Faculty of Technology at Makerere University, with the purpose of helping them improve the quality and value of their outputs; to introduce the engineering students to the opportunities and potential of the small-scale sector and develop technologies appropriate to them; and, to use the staff of the Faculty of Technology to provide technical and professional solutions that would assist solve the problems in the small-scale enterprises. The UGT General Manager, who was assisted by an accountant and an administrator, and later a loans manager, worked through a network of clubs. Each Gatsby club had an elected executive committee, comprising fully paid up members. The clubs were free to employ full-time staff to assist with the running of the clubs. The compelling reason for starting the Gatsby clubs was to provide an appropriate institutional framework that would facilitate a continuous interaction with the small-scale enterprises supported by the UGT. In effect, the Gatsby clubs provided a decentralized institutional framework through which UGT could offer services to club members. This way, the Trust was able to offer services to members in about thirty districts of Uganda. The clubs also served another vital function; they acted as collateral for the loans extended to their members. Through peer pressure, they ensured that their members did not default on loan repayment.

The clubs were not merely talk shops; they provided a range of services to their members, such as business seminars, workshops, business plan preparation, business advisory and extension services, business training courses, local showrooms for members to exhibit their products, sponsorship to local and regional trade fairs. There was also provision for assisting their members with technology development and transfer through the Gatsby Centre for Enterprise Promotion, based at the Faculty of Technology. This was a facility set up specifically

to assist these industries acquire and improve their technological skills. The clubs also assisted their members to access loans for working capital from the Uganda Gatsby Trust Loan Scheme. After the closure of the Cooperative Bank, we had to devise a new Loan Scheme for the enterprises, which UGT was assisting to access working capital. In addition, the UGT had a regular Newsletter to which clubs contributed articles or highlighted their activities.

As far as support to the uplifting of the small scale enterprises went, the UGT work programme revolved around five broad themes. One theme focused on technical and managerial skills development through training courses. The Trust provided tailor-made training courses for managers and artisans of small-scale enterprises, to address managerial and technical skill deficiencies. Typical courses included management, entrepreneurship development, business planning, productivity, quality improvement, costing, credit management, record keeping; skills upgrading in metal fabrication, motor vehicle repair, foundry and black smithery, carpentry and joinery, textiles, food processing and so on. The second theme focused on business development services, where UGT, in collaboration with the Faculty of Technology sent members of staff from the various departments of the faculty to offer extension and mentorship services to interested enterprises with the aim of diagnosing their problems and formulating appropriate solutions. The service included assisting the enterprises prepare well-articulated and costed business plans. The third theme was concerned with marketing. UGT assisted the club members to find markets for their products through the provision of local showrooms and participation in national and regional trade fairs. The fourth theme focused on credit and working capital. UGT set up a revolving fund from which Gatsby club members could access loans to meet their working capital needs or to purchase machinery to improve on their technologies. The loan scheme was administered by the Credit Manager and UGT Loans Committee. This scheme replaced the original one which the UGT operated in collaboration with the defunct Cooperative Bank before the Bank was liquidated. The loan scheme had four cycles. The first-time borrower could get a maximum of three million shillings repayable in twelve months. A second borrower had to access as much as six million shillings, which was repayable in fifteen months. A third-time borrower could access a maximum of ten million shillings, repayable in eighteen months, and a fourth timer would get a whopping fifteen million shillings, which was repayable in two years. All loans had a grace period of two months. It was assumed that, by the time borrowers paid off the second or third loans, their enterprises would have grown to such an extent that they would have acquired their own premises and solid collaterals, which they could use to access loans from commercial banks.

The fifth theme was a machine lease and purchase scheme. UGT wanted to establish a scheme, which would assist members lease or purchase their own machinery. The scheme was meant to be complementary to the Credit Scheme.

Under this scheme, UGT would provide machinery worth up to ten million shillings for individual leases or up to fifty million for group leases. The sixth theme was on promoting students' activities aimed at introducing students of engineering to the potential of the small enterprise sector for job creation and self-employment. The activities fell into three categories. The first category was industrial attachments, which enabled engineering students in the Faculty of Technology to be attached to small-scale enterprises for their industrial training period, lasting up to three months per year. The purpose was to assist the students to appreciate the problems and potential of the small-scale sector. The exposure stimulated many students into thinking of setting up their own micro-enterprises upon graduation, for self-employment, which some did. The second activity had to do with student projects. Under this activity UGT provided financial support to the final year engineering students to design and produce appropriate technology proto-types. The aim was to facilitate the transfer of the technology they developed to the small-scale industrial sector through the Gatsby Centre for Enterprise Promotion (GCEP). The third involved technology development and transfer through the GCEP. The GCEP was purposely set up with the objectives of developing student prototypes into marketable technologies, and developing new appropriate technologies on demand-driven basis. As we have seen, Dr Moses Musaaazi of the Electrical Engineering Department was its first Manager.

By the time I was winding up in 2004, we had started talking of achievements and impact. By then, we had established a network of eighteen clubs in Kampala, Jinja, Mbale, Mbarara, Kabarole, Mubende, Masaka, Masindi, Gulu, Lira and Soroti with a total membership of 1,200 – all small-scale businessmen and women who were steadily growing their businesses. Secondly, by then, UGT had played a role in the growth of 600 enterprises country-wide. The list included many businesses that were doing impressively well, thanks to UGT intervention. Additionally, the Trust had set up two small-scale industrial parks in Njeru, Jinja and in Mbarara, where the UGT Club members were setting up shops and workshops. Through its more than 300 training courses and seminars, UGT had trained over 15,000 participants countrywide in technical and business management skills, and carried out 3,000 mentorship visits. Some of the participants, who attended the initial courses and seminars in 1995, had moved on into more serious and bigger businesses. By 2004, some of the participants, who had attended the UGT training courses, for example the Matsikos of NUMA Feeds Limited in Mbarara, had become the proud owners of very successful and rapidly expanding enterprises. About 400 supported enterprises had grown and graduated out of the SMEs. In addition, since 1995, the Trust had sponsored over 450 small scale business owners to Trade Fairs in and outside Uganda, notably the Jua Kali Exhibitions in Kenya and other parts of East Africa. At the same time, UGT had developed over 1,500 business plans for club members.

Over the same period, UGT had also funded 170 industrial prototypes designed and fabricated by the engineering students in the Faculty of Technology, something that had never happened before. Due to lack of funds in the past, most of the engineering students' final year projects ended at the design stage. Some of these prototypes were well designed and could be patented. The solar timber dryer, pineapple juice extractor, feed mixer and the Moringa seed grinder, in particular, caught my attention and I wished that someone with sufficient start-up capital could take them under license and commercialise them. From this experience, I quickly learnt that when it came to product development, research was usually the easier part; development was much harder, because it was capital intensive, with no real guarantee that the product would be an immediate commercial success.

Fortunately, we were able to license ten student prototypes as commercialised. Finally, as part of the benefits accruing to the University by hosting UGT, over 700 engineering students in the Faculty of Technology had undertaken their industrial training in the small-scale industries, instead of scrambling for a few training opportunities in the few big industrial concerns. The Uganda Gatsby Trust was spending most of its funds on skills training and development for the small-and medium-scale industries, business extension services, supporting the Gatsby clubs, organising trade fairs, promoting product marketing, business and staff development through seminars, engineering students, attachments in the SSEs, product development, technology development and transfer and provision of credit for working capital to Gatsby club members. By 2002, the Revolving Fund had grown to 500 million shillings with a repayment rate of ninety six percent. To crown it all, UGT won the trophy for best exhibitor at the Uganda International Trade Fair (Small Scale Division) twice; in 1997 and 2002. In 1998 however, we came second.

This was another truly incredible innovation and a remarkable experience for all of us who were involved in it right from the beginning in 1995. Through the Uganda Gatsby Trust, Makerere University was fulfilling its third mandate; service to the community, this time not so much in words but in deeds. Our usual rhetoric and lip service to community engagement had given way to practical action with tangible outputs and outcomes. I sensed that, this time, we were making an impact. The experience had clearly demonstrated that a university could be of relevance to the community without necessarily losing its identity as a centre of academic excellence. We owed it all to Lord Sainsbury and the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, to Professor George Kirya, who had the vision and confidence that it could work, and to the colleagues at the Faculty of Technology for all their efforts that made it work. By all accounts, the UGT programmes were sustainable. As a footnote, at the time of my departure, UGT was generating sufficient income of its own to cover most of the core activities, without further injection of funds from London. I had also enjoyed participating in the inter-Gatsby Trust meetings

in Mombasa in Kenya, Arusha in Tanzania and Duala and Kribi in Cameroon. It was a truly rewarding experience.

For the interest of the reader, Kenya Gatsby Trust was the first to be set up in 1992, followed by Tanzania Gatsby Trust in 1993 and the Cameron Gatsby Foundation in 1994. The UGT, which was launched in 1995, was the last in the line. The GCF was also interested in agriculture, so Lawrence Cocroft, a man with a good taste for Chinese cuisine, on his many visits to Uganda squeezed in time for a trip to Namulonge Research Institute, where the GCF was supporting some research projects, one of which I believe was on cassava.

### **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Other UN Agencies**

I have already said as much as I could about Makerere's relationship with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as its sister organisation, UNESCO, over the years. However, I have been lumping them together with other major development agencies which have contributed so much to Makerere's recovery and development over the years, and that does not do full justice to the long association Makerere has had with members of the UN family in both good and bad times. It is therefore, only fair that I give them similar treatment. As we have seen, their support came at a moment of acute need when the going was extremely tough and nearly every Makerere friend had jumped ship. I am well aware that I could be paying homage to them here at the risk of over-repeating myself but, as people say, "what is good for the goose is good for the gander". The list of what the two organisations have been able to do for Makerere is long, stretching back to the late 1960s when the UNDP sponsored the first regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics for all Anglophone Africa at Makerere. Following the break-up of the University of East Africa in 1970, UNDP assisted the university to start the Faculties of Technology and Veterinary Medicine. Although UNDP never quite pulled out of Uganda during the difficult years, it scaled down its assistance to the country and Makerere University quite considerably until the situation had sufficiently stabilised.

It was after the 1978-1979 war which ousted Idi Amin from power that the UNDP started scaling up its assistance to Makerere once again. But the lacklustre support from the unstable Governments that replaced Amin's administration, the ensuing insecurity in the country, academic and technical staff shortages and problems with new equipment installation, as well as the inability on the part of the university to provide secure accommodation to its experts almost rendered the renewed UNDP assistance to the university ineffective. Nevertheless, the problems did not deter the two agencies from continuing to support the university. The UGA 79/001 Project based in the Faculty of Science was one of the first projects UNDP financed soon after the war. It became effective in 1980 when the first Chief Technical Adviser, Dr T. Somer, then a Professor of Chemical Engineering at

the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, arrived. Professor Somer worked alone on the project for over a year and as we have seen before, he was responsible for designing and drafting the syllabus for the Industrial Chemistry option, which was a new course in the Department of Chemistry. In the academic year 1981/82, three other experts joined the project, and at its peak in the mid-1980s, there were six experts in all. By August 1987 when the project officially ended, UNDP had fielded nine experts and invested US\$ 2.1 million.

The original concept of the UNDP/UNESCO Project was to introduce new courses in three areas of Applied Science, namely Industrial Chemistry, Applied and Mining Geology and Wildlife Biology. Progress from 1980 through to 1983 was slow, largely due, to the delay in fielding experts. I guess that at the time, few people in the world in their right senses wanted to work in Uganda, a country that had earned an unenviable reputation as unsafe and characterised by wanton killings and on the verge of a civil war. Certainly, the 1980/86 war did not make the situation any easier for UNDP. Despite these setbacks, the UNDP remained steadfast in its commitment to the project, which made good progress. The project went through three phases. The first phase, which actually began in 1975 and ended in 1980, was essentially holding the fort, helping Makerere ease staff shortages. The second phase which began (1980 – 1982) involved designing new courses in Industrial Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry, Applied and Mining Geology in the Department of Geology and Wildlife Biology in the Department of Zoology, as well as preparing orders, taking deliveries and installing new equipment. At the request of UNDP, departments in the Faculty of Science compiled an inventory of old equipment that needed repair. UNDP fielded a maintenance expert for this purpose. Both Senate and the University Council approved and launched the three new academic programmes in the 1982/83 academic year. The third and last phase of the UNDP/UNESCO was essentially supporting staff development for the three new disciplines, starting a few new programmes and revamping a few old ones. In academic year 1983/84, new postgraduate programmes in Geology and Zoology started, and the old ones expanded to cover more of the applied aspects of the two disciplines.

In the Department of Chemistry, the specific project objective was to design a new course in Industrial Chemistry, initiate new courses in Analytical Chemistry, provide some support to Physical Chemistry which was grossly understaffed at the time, set up a departmental quality control laboratory, and provide and install new equipment. The implementation of the Industrial Chemistry option was a major achievement for the UNDP/UNESCO Project in the Chemistry Department. Besides the curriculum, it also involved setting up and equipping a Unit Operations Laboratory with ten pilot plants and providing the department with supporting equipment for training students in the industrial processes commonly used in Uganda. Support to the Department of Geology included a couple of new off-road

vehicles, field gear tents and supplies. The vehicles and new camp gear improved and maintained the department's extensive annual field-training exercise.

The department also took comprehensive delivery of new teaching audio-visual aids. The departmental library collection was extensively upgraded with a new stock of books and other reading material. It also received additional support to develop new courses in Applied Geology in close liaison with the Uganda Government's Department of Geological Surveys and Mines at Entebbe. In the Department of Zoology, new courses related to wildlife were introduced in both the undergraduate and postgraduate curricula. The new courses put emphasis on fieldwork for which the Project provided the relevant camping equipment and an off-road vehicle. In addition, the department established close collaboration with the East African Wildlife Society and the Zoological Society of New York. With the latter, the department made extensive use of the Makerere University Biological Field Station, a research facility in the Kibale National Park in Kabarole District. Research undertaken there focused primarily on primate ecology.

Besides the specific assistance to the three departments, the UNDP through the Project extended support to the rest of the Faculty of Science through the provision of senior staff fellowships for short-term study visits outside Uganda, as well as postgraduate fellowships. During the same period, the faculty obtained a 65-seater Leyland bus, two Suzuki Jeeps and two Yamaha motorcycles. The establishment of the Computer Centre in 1985, which later transformed into an independent Institute of Computer Science and in 2004 became the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology, was one of the most important outcomes of the project. For the first time, Makerere University was offering a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Computer Science. By 1988, UNDP had invested US\$3.4 million in the faculty, US\$ 1.3 million over and above the original budget of US\$2.1 million. The extra investment supported the one-year extension that allowed the project to wind up properly. During the final year, one of the UNDP experts, Professor Derrick Pomroy, who had been heading the Wildlife Programme under the project, assisted the faculty plan and start an Institute of Environment and Natural Resources.

As we have seen the UNDP assistance to Makerere University spans several decades and over the years, other Faculties have benefited too. For instance, from 1969 up to 1976, the UNDP extended a grant totaling US\$1.96 million and technical advisers to the university to start a regional Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics, the objective of which was to train professional statisticians from the Anglophone countries of Africa. From 1986 up to 1990, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine was a beneficiary of a US\$1.5 million grant, which supported the faculty's continuing education programme, and veterinary extension services to farmers to increase and improve livestock production. For four years beginning from 1984, UNDP invested US\$440,000 in the Faculty of Medicine to strengthen

its teaching and research capacity. Part of the grant covered the cost of technical assistance to the faculty.

The Department of Planning and Development is one of the outputs to have come out of the generous support of UNDP to the university during the Donors' Conference of 1987. After the Conference, it became clear that the university needed to strengthen the planning function. The UNDP provided US\$922,000 as seed grant to help the university start the Department of Planning and Development. It also provided occasional technical assistance to the new department in its formative years. The UNDP support to the Planning and Development Department officially ended in 1990 when the department was fully established. The engineering curriculum in the Faculty of Technology, drafted in 1970, was developed with the assistance of UNDP experts. In 1991 and ending in 1994, UNDP assisted the Department of Economics to design and start a new Master of Arts degree in Economic Policy and Planning and as we have seen, after Idi Amin had expelled the university's expatriate staff and the Asian community in 1972, the UNDP provided professors to fill the vacuum left by their departure.

Between 1969 and 1994, the UNDP had made totaling US\$9 million grants to Makerere. No doubt, UNDP and other UN specialised agencies such as UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA, FAO have made an enormous contribution to the development of Makerere University. It was therefore a privilege and honour for me to welcome Dr Mark Malloch Brown, the Administrator General of the United Nation Development Programme, to the university on November 12, 2003. During his short visit, he delivered an exciting public lecture in the Main Hall on the Millennium Development Goals.

### **Rakai Project – An Incredible Experiment in Life-saving, Multi-donor Support and Institutional Collaboration**

In my considered opinion, the Medical School's Rakai Project was an excellent example of what is achievable when institutions decide to collaborate on a big and multi-dimensional project, with funding coming from a multiplicity of donors. No doubt, several faculties and departments at Makerere have been and continued to be involved in several multi-donor and multi-partner projects and programmes. Nevertheless, because of its sheer scale and the problem it sought to address, I have decided to single out the Rakai Project in the Faculty of Medicine for a special mention to illustrate what a resource-constrained university could do through innovation and imagination. In 1987, some Medical Scientists at Makerere decided to conduct an investigation into what appeared to be a strange and mysterious disease, then observed only in South-East region of the country, on the border with Tanzania, which is now part of the Rakai District. The local population on the Ugandan side of the border had dubbed it "slim disease" because of its body wasting effect on the people who contracted it. On the

Tanzanian side, the residents of towns like Mutukula, Kanyigo and other parts of Kyaka had a more fancy name for it – “Juliana”. I was informed that Juliana was the nickname of men’s stylish attire popular in that region at the time. Because no one knew the cause of this strange condition, speculation was rife in places like Kakuuto, Kyotera, Ddimu landing site and other towns in the Rakai District, that the mysterious disease was the work of a spell that had been cast on those who had crossed the border and looted property from Tanzania when Amin’s army attacked and bombed Bukoba town in 1978.

The Tanzanians believed the disease was a curse on the rich boys who had made a fortune out of smuggling goods *magendo*, particularly the semi-processed coffee beans, popularly known as *kase*, across the border. At the time, no one understood the kind of disease which was making seemingly healthy people lose weight without explanation. It was still a puzzle! Worse still, when patients suffering from the “slim disease” went down with simple ailments like cough or fever, they either failed to respond to treatment, took very long to recover or did not recover at all. Constant fever was one of the characteristic features of people suffering from this strange disease.

In that year, Dr Nelson Sewankambo of the Department of Internal Medicine and Dr David Serwadda of the Institute of Public Health, travelled to Rakai, the district which seemed to be worst hit and made a shocking discovery. The “slim disease”, which caused the unexplained weight loss and body wasting, was actually related to the recently discovered Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) caused by the Human Immune Virus (HIV). This was the first time AIDS had been detected in Uganda, and possibly in the whole of Africa. When it was first identified, most people and some experts too believed that AIDS was a disease of homosexual men and not heterosexuals. The discovery called for the immediate establishment of a population-based cohort to study various aspects of the disease. That was the genesis of the Rakai Project. The project was initiated in 1988 to study the dynamics, prevalence and magnitude of the “slim disease” in that area of the country. I am sure that when they began, both Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda had no idea that they were laying the foundations of a gigantic and successful project. In the process, several donors and agencies agreed to collaborate with Makerere University on the project and fund it as well.

As they developed the project concept in 1987, Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda approached the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) based in Atlanta, Georgia and the United States Agency for International Development or USAID for funding and cooperation on the project. In turn, the USAID decided to invite Columbia University in New York to collaborate with Makerere on the project. Dr Wawer of Columbia University, together with Nelson Sewankambo and David Serwadda submitted a proposal to USAID for seed funding. The

Agency accepted to fund the proposal that facilitated the launch of the project in 1988, with the main offices and laboratories at Mulago and an outpost office at Kalisizo at the boundary between Masaka and Rakai Districts. The project was exclusively about HIV/AIDS and its awareness among the people of Rakai District. The then relatively new Rakai District, carved out of the Masaka District, with a population of almost 700,000 was one of the districts in Uganda which HIV/AIDS had affected the most. It is one of the poorest districts in the country with very limited health care provisions. Rakai was also one of the districts bordering Tanzania that had experienced the full brunt of the 1972 and 1979 wars. The Rakai Project's mission was to improve public health in the District through technical support to the health care delivery system in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, backed up with relevant research. Besides the international partners, the project worked in close collaboration with the Uganda Virus Institute at Entebbe and the Ministry of Health in order to maximise synergy in the fight against this incurable disease. The Rakai Project was much more than the usual university research projects, with several high quality papers published in premier journals like *Lancet* as a measure of its success. It also took on a social responsibility role.

Besides the research component, the project had other objectives as well. Key among these was to improve the AIDS awareness in the district and how people could avoid being infected or re-infected with the virus. Secondly, the project set out to improve the quality of health care and to assist people cope with situations of increasing death of the adult heads of the households, which left many children to fend for themselves. Thirdly, it aimed at exploring other ways of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS infection apart from the use of the condom and to find ways and means of taking care of children, who had lost all their parents and guardians. From a scientific standpoint, one of the objectives was to improve maternal and child health by assessing the effect of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) treatment during pregnancy on mother-to-child HIV transmission. The other was to conduct a community-based randomised trial of male circumcision. This was because studies had shown that some sections of the population had started promoting it, believing that circumcised men, the majority of whom were Muslim males, were less prone to catching the disease. They had seen it as a good strategy for preventing HIV/AIDS infection and transmission. The last objective was to encourage people to go for voluntary testing to know their HIV status and learn to live with the disease positively.

Over time, the project expanded and attracted more researchers, partners and other funding agencies besides the USAID. The Uganda Virus Research Institute and Ministry of Health scientists, Makerere University staff, American scientists from Columbia and Johns Hopkins Universities and Walter Reed Army Institute of Research Scientists were some of the many researchers who had worked on

the Rakai Project since its launch in 1988. The Danish Development Agency, World Health Organization, the National Institutes of Health, the Rockefeller Foundation, Mellon Foundation, Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, Forgarty Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Pfizer Foundation, and NGOs like Concern International, Heal the Nation, the Lutheran World Federation; the World Federation and the Rakai AIDS Information Network (RAIN), were some of the major partners and funders of the project. At the time of my departure, what the project had achieved was quite impressive and going strong. One of the key outcomes was securing popular participation of the people of Rakai District in attaining high levels of HIV/AIDS awareness and the drastic reduction of the prevalence of STDs among the population, most of them unrelated to HIV. This was achieved through the project's intensive STD treatment and preventive measures. To this effect, the project was actively involved in the Rakai STD Control for AIDS Prevention Trials, initiated in 1994 and completed data collection in 1999, which was a complex and intensive community- randomised controlled trial as part of the STD control programme. This part of the project sought to test the hypothesis of whether intensive STD control would result in reduced HIV transmission. Although the results indicated that the viral load was the most important predictive factor for HIV transmission to an uninfected partner, the study showed that STDs were important co-factors in the transmission of the virus from partner to partner. Therefore, it was important to control their prevalence. The trials seemed to have paid some handsome dividends. According to the investigators, the major spin-off from this project activity was the significant reduction in the prevalence of key diseases such as trichomonas vaginalis and syphilis in the district attributed to the mass STD treatment.

It also tested the beneficial effects of good STD control on mother and child viral transmission during birth. The results showed that following a simple presumptive treatment for STDs offered during pregnancy, there was reduced viral transmission and a substantial improvement in maternal and infant health. This trial helped to understand the correlation that exists between the STDs and HIV infection. Then, this fact was not common knowledge. The project's capacity to collect, analyse and interpret complex HIV/AIDS biological and demographic data led to multiple new findings, which came out of the intensive community epidemiological and behavioural studies that documented the HIV/STD epidemics and risk factors. Those were significant studies and findings in those earlier years when scientists were just beginning to understand the epidemiology of the disease. Another achievement of significance was the fact that the project succeeded in creating effective linkages with the district's political and technical leadership, as well as attracting national and international collaboration and funding. The combined effort led to a substantial reduction in the HIV infection in the district.

In terms of the real benefits from the project that go beyond the new knowledge about the HIV/AIDS from the scientific studies, which accrued to the people of Rakai, there are many that one could cite. At the time Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda and Maria Wawer conceived the idea of starting the Rakai Project, Uganda, and for that matter the world, knew very little about HIV/AIDS. Rakai District was in the midst of a serious health crisis. Towns became almost ghost towns and whole villages were abandoned as people ran away from the District under the mistaken belief that they were escaping the dreadful disease. Unknown to those who were running away but already infected, they were running away with the killer disease lurking in their veins and were about to unleash the epidemic on the rest of the country. However, it did not matter what their destination was, their fate was already sealed. Sooner than later, they would all die. The district and its trading centres that dotted the Masaka-Mutukula highways, formerly lively commercial centres and sources of badly needed revenue, were now deserted and devoid of their inhabitants. On the other hand, the bars, lodges and little hotels in those townships were also bastions of commercial sex. At the time, most sex workers did not use condoms. For the majority of them, it was live affair. As a South African friend of mine used to say, "You do not eat a banana with its skin". This initial attitude to condoms exacerbated the prevalence of the infection, which in most towns along the main roads had reached twenty five to thirty five percent of the urban population. The project's contribution was to sensitise the community about the risks inherent in engaging in unprotected sex and to tell people that it was a wrong perception to continue believing that HIV/AIDS was a curse or a disease of the homosexuals. The virus did not discriminate between homosexuals and heterosexuals. Worse still, the infected person could carry the virus in the blood for several years without showing signs of the disease. The idea was to drive the point home that sadly, HIV/AIDS had neither cure nor vaccine. To be told that you were HIV sero-positive meant you were on death row. The best vaccine was to avoid risky behaviour. These simple, but powerful messages had an impact. They helped change people's perceptions and misconceptions about the "slim disease". However, when people realised that the disease was incurable and carried a social stigma, they became reluctant to go for testing. For example, in 1990, only ten per cent of the participants in the studies and trials wanted to know their HIV status. At the time, many people did not want to know their serological status. It was not a smart thing to know that you carried the deadly virus in your blood. However, over time, the project made it easy for people to go for HIV/AIDS testing. Through counselling services, people testing sero-positive were equipped with coping skills so they could live with the virus positively. Initially, it was not easy, but by 2004, over sixty per cent of the participants in the STD trials were requesting their serological test results.

The project's efforts were not limited to town dwellers only. The rural areas benefited from health education and community mobilisation programmes too.

The project made extensive use of drama groups, village meetings, sports activities and trained health educators to get the message across. The NGO, Rakai AIDS Information Network, played a critical and central role in these campaigns. Through the Rakai Project, all study sites were equipped with fixed and mobile clinics. The clinics became the drug distribution points and counselling centres. Although they were located in the study sites, all residents in Rakai District had access to the free general health care provided by the Rakai Project without exception. With funding from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and in collaboration with Columbia University and Johns Hopkins University, the project also assisted the District Health Services Department to improve the delivery of family planning services. With the assistance of its twenty or so counsellors, the project was providing family planning services integrated in the voluntary HIV testing and counselling. Before 1995, family planning practice in Rakai District was very low, primarily for fear of the unknown side effects, but the project was able to innovate strategies that helped women overcome the fear. Above all, the project provided employment to the rural communities of Rakai District. The aim was to assist the communities improve their living standards.

By the time I left the university, the project had not shown any sign of relenting or ending any time soon. It had become a showcase for the Faculty of Medicine, with lots of fringe benefits to members of staff involved. No doubt the high quality publications that came out of the research conducted in Rakai under the auspices of the Rakai project were key in the promotion of the university staff involved in the project. Dr Sewankambo, who co-initiated the project when he was still in the junior academic ranks, rose to the rank of full Professor of Medicine in the Department of Medicine. His colleague, Dr David Serwadda was promoted to Associate Professor of Public Health in the Institute of Public Health. There were also new planned studies. One of the studies was investigating the link between the relatively high incidence of cervical cancer and the HIV infection. Earlier studies had shown that Uganda was one of the countries in the world with the highest rate of cervical cancer. Other studies had shown that the incidence of cervical cancer was higher in HIV positive women. Unfortunately, most hospitals and health centres lacked the screening facilities for this type of cancer, so the affected women were having late-stage disseminate malignancies, which was an incurable stage of the disease. The Rakai Project was piloting a novel way of screening for cervical cancer which was cheap and simple to use.

Additionally, the project had started focusing attention on improving the care of the dying children and their families. Research had shown that HIV was the leading cause of paediatric morbidity and mortality in Africa, and the number of infants and minors dying from the disease were steadily rising. The available statistics had shown that two million children were infected and eleven million were orphaned by the disease. Therefore, care for the dying children and their

families when there was no known cure for the disease or vaccine had become an issue of serious concern. The project had planned to undertake a study that would provide descriptive data to guide the provision of palliative and bereavement care for the children afflicted with HIV/AIDS and their families. Rakai District was the host of many such cases.

Another study, *Alternative and Inexpensive Markers for HIV Viral Load and CD Lymphocyte Count for the Treatment of HIV/AIDS in Rakai*, was an evaluation of inexpensive algorithms that allowed a medical practitioner in a resource-constrained setting to initiate and monitor highly active antiretroviral therapy with limited laboratory and diagnostic facilities. The study would allow the researchers to evaluate alternative, but inexpensive markers to initiate and monitor HIV therapy, not only in Rakai District but also throughout the country.

In collaboration with the Walter Reed Research Institute of the Department of Defence in the USA, the Rakai Project investigators were also involved in HIV vaccine development and candidate vaccine trials. Funded by the Henry Jackson Foundation, the Walter Reed Institute started collaborating with Makerere University on the Health Science Programme of the Rakai Project in 1999. However, in 2002, a new memorandum of understanding was signed, which extended the scope of collaboration to include vaccine development and evaluation trials. A state-of-the-art laboratory was set up at Mulago, which necessitated adding an extension to the old Pathology building. It was a fulfilling experience to know that during my time as Vice Chancellor, Makerere University scientists made such a significant contribution to the fight against a killer disease which, if left unchecked, could have devastated the nation and caused a catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. I have heard people say and write authoritatively that Makerere staff did not engage in research. Whether that observation is valid or not, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Maria Wawer and their colleagues deserve our gratitude.

### **Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa – The Return of the MacAdams to Makerere**

The early involvement of the members of staff of the Faculty of Medicine in HIV/AIDS research and care for the AIDS patients, notably through the Rakai Project, attracted many internationally renowned academics and researchers to Makerere; the majority of them from USA. They joined hands with Makerere's medical scientists in their ongoing arduous efforts aimed at understanding this new disease, its dynamics and the best ways of controlling its spread, as well as providing care for the afflicted. They came from various institutions in the USA, notably Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland Ohio; Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland; and University of Utah, among others.

Several of them were specialists in infectious diseases. This was the beginning of what became to be known as the Academic Alliance, officially launched in 2001. The American team comprised Marie A. Sande of the University of Utah School of Medicine; Jerold Ellner, who was then at the Case Western University but later moved over to the New Jersey School of Medicine; Thomas Quinn from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; Michael Scheld of the University of Virginia; and Catherine Wilfert from the Elizabeth Glaser Paediatrics AIDS Foundation. The Makerere team comprised Professors Roy Mugerwa and Nelson Sewankambo, as well as Drs Moses Kamywa, Elly Katabira, Harriet Mayanja Kizza – all of them from the Department of Medicine; Edward Katongole Mbidde of the Uganda Cancer Institute, Philippa Musoke of the Department of Paediatrics, David Serwadda and Fred Wabwire Mangen both from the Institute of Public Health. Its mission, which at first sounded too ambitious and possibly unattainable, was to build the first large-scale state-of-the-art clinic, laboratory and medical training centre in Africa for the treatment and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Through a generous grant provided by the Pfizer Foundation, the Alliance realised its dream with the opening of the Infectious Diseases Institute on the campus of the Medical School at Mulago in October 2004.

Sometime in early 2001, Professor Nelson Sewankambo gave me a piece of very exciting news. He told me that the Pfizer Corporation, one of the leading pharmaceutical companies in the world had given the Academic Alliance a grant worth US\$11 million for their HIV/AIDS programme in Uganda and Africa. The grant would come from the Pfizer Foundation, which was a separate entity from the Corporation. The second part of his mission was to alert me that, in anticipation of the grant disbursement, there were some pre-requisites the university had to meet. The juicier part of the story was the prospect of having a new building in the Medical School. As far I could remember, it would be the first new building in the School in several decades. So, top on the list of the pre-requisites was land for the new building at Mulago, which would house the clinics, laboratories and office space for the director, research scientists, clinicians and support staff. He also indicated that the President of the Pfizer Corporation and Pfizer Foundation, Hank McKinnel would make a visit to Uganda in the middle of the year and personally make the announcement in Kampala, adding that the university was requested to invite the President of Uganda to chair the ceremony. I was glad that the request to invite the President came early, because he was always busy and hard to get at short notice. We sent the invitation well ahead of time. Secondly one of our very own, Professor Gilbert Bukenya, was the Minister for the Presidency, so we were almost certain that if we approached him in time he would be able to fit the event in the President's busy diary. Knowing the role he had played in the fight against the AIDS pandemic through his many awareness campaigns, we were confident that the President would honour the invitation. Since the two men were old friends

and classmates during their undergraduate days at the Medical School, I decided to leave the talking to Professor Bukenya to Nelson Sewankambo. As it turned out, Professor Bukenya was not easy to track down. The man was almost as busy as his boss. Sewankambo had to try several times to have an appointment with him. The personal touch worked. The President accepted the invitation to meet with the Pfizer President. The occasion was also intended to be the official launch of the Academic Alliance. In June 2001, Dr Hank McKinnel visited Uganda and met with President Museveni in his office at the International Conference Centre. After the behind-the-closed-door talks, Dr McKinnel made the long awaited announcement in a plenary session. In his short remarks, which I have paraphrased, Dr McKinnel said that the Pfizer Foundation was happy to support the Academic Alliance in its noble goal of fighting HIV/AIDS in Africa and in Uganda in particular, a country which had taken a lead in the fight against the dreaded disease. He did not specify the nature of the support, but what he said was enough as we already knew the contents of the Corporation's HIV/AIDS package, US\$11 million and drugs. As expected, President Museveni was grateful to the Pfizer Corporation and its Foundation for lending support to the fight against the killer disease which had posed such a huge challenge to the very existence of humankind. The President then went on to declare the Academic Alliance officially launched.

The Academic Alliance for AIDS Care and Prevention in Africa was started as a not-for-profit organisation by a group of academics, with the sole aim of setting up the first large-scale AIDS research and treatment facility in Africa at Makerere University Medical School. The new facility would provide the AIDS patients with the most up-to-date treatment regimens and train healthcare workers from all over Africa on the latest treatments and prevention methods. Although the bulk of the funding came from the Pfizer Foundation, this rather ambitious project was started as a joint undertaking between Makerere University on one hand and the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the Pangaea Global AIDS Foundations, international and local non-government organisations, on the other. Makerere University, the Infectious Diseases Society of America and the Academic Alliance ran the training programme as a joint effort, based on a comprehensive curriculum which included lectures and clinical experience in the epidemiology, classification of HIV/AIDS (the Human Immuno Virus or HIV existed in more than one strain – initially two strains had been identified, namely HIV1 and HIV2, later other HIV sub-types were discovered) as well as the manifestation of the disease. Patient care at the facility focused on treating the opportunistic infections associated with HIV/AIDS, delivery of Anti Retro Viral (ARV) drugs, prevention and palliative care. The third function was to undertake research into all aspects of the virus and the AIDS disease. This was the beginning of the Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI) at Makerere University.

The medical doctors going through the institute's training programmes left well equipped with skills to safely and knowledgeably deliver comprehensive HIV/AIDS care, ARVs and to become mentors and trainers of others. By 2002 when it opened its doors, 50 doctors had received training and the demand was rising. To ensure high quality standards and a fair balance between the host country, Uganda and the rest of Africa, the physicians enrolling in the institute's programme had to go through a competitive selection process. Uganda had half the slots on the programmes, the other half was reserved for trainees from other African countries. The physicians enrolling in this intensive training programme came from both rural and urban settings throughout Africa. Trainees had to take pre- and post-examinations as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the training. Post-training follow-up support was also provided to graduates in the form of refresher courses, lecture updates and newsletters. Besides the courses targeting the physicians, the institute developed programmes for allied healthcare providers, such as nurses, clinical officers, laboratory technologists, drug dispensers and others. This was to ensure that this cadre of healthcare providers who assisted the physicians had a solid knowledge and skills base for their clinical decisions.

The leadership of the Academic Alliance wanted their facility constructed and completed in the shortest time possible, so they requested the university to make quick design sketches and preliminary bills of quantities for the proposed IDI building. Technology Consult (TECO) architects and quantity surveyors worked judiciously and in a relatively short time, the drawings and the bills of quantities were ready, but there was a snag. TECO designed a three-storied building in accordance with the University Council's policy of not-less-than-three-floors for all new buildings constructed on prime land. Mulago campus, where the Medical School is located, fell in that category. In the meantime, Pfizer Inc and Pfizer Foundation had contracted Pangaea Global Foundation, an affiliate of the San Francisco AIDS Foundation, to manage the Academic Alliance grant on their behalf.

Soon, we ran into disagreement with the Pangaea Foundation over the design, cost and TECO's professional fees. Fortunately, after several meetings and a lot of hard talk, the disagreement was amicably resolved and, in November 2002, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pangaea Foundation for the construction of an ultra-modern building behind the Department of Physiology laboratory, a site overlooking the new Mulago Teaching Hospital, to house the Infectious Diseases Institute. A British-based Civil Engineering firm won the tender. Ground breaking took place on February 26, 2003 amidst a modest, but very colourful ceremony. The American Ambassador to Uganda and a former Makerere student, Jim Kolker and Professor Gilbert Bukenya, who was once Dean of Medicine, held the shovel together in the symbolic act of cutting the sod. In appreciation of the role Bukenya had played in the behind-the-scenes negotiations, which brought the project to fruition, we decided to invite him as co-guest of honour for the occasion.

Although I had a problem with my legs, which made walking hard and painful, I made every effort to attend the ceremony in person. I remember Professor Bukenya teasing about what he thought was my pending gout. In reply, I told him that since he had abandoned Medicine, I did not trust his quick diagnosis, but hastened to add that in his new political career he was heading for bigger things, it was just a matter of time. He shrugged it off saying that I too had got the prophecy wrong, I had gazed in the wrong crystal ball. As if I had read the President's mind, sure enough shortly after that ceremony he was appointed Vice President of Uganda. In his brief speech, the American Ambassador said that investments like this were critical to the strengthening of healthcare services, which was an essential part of the care and prevention of HIV/AIDS, and mitigation of the long-term economic impact of the disease, adding that it took the initiative and partnership of people from the academia, private industry, non-government organizations and governments to make such important projects happen. Completed over a year later, a new building housing the Infections Diseases Institute is one of the most modern research and clinical facility at Mulago. It has the latest and the state-of-the-art equipment. Initially, it was the understanding that the new institute would start as an independent entity, a sort of a company officially known as the Infectious Diseases Institute Limited, within the Medical School, but later Makerere University would take over ownership.

As work on the Infectious Diseases Institute building progressed and other Academic Alliance activities continued under Professor Nelson Sewankambo's oversight on the Ugandan side, it became clear that in order to get the new institute off to a good start, it required the leadership of a highly capable person, moreover with a proven track record as director. I had occasion to discuss this critical issue with Nelson Sewankambo and other members of the Alliance a couple of times, whenever they paid me a visit in my office. One day, I was pleasantly surprised when Nelson Sewankambo called me and told me that he was booking an appointment to see me with Dr Keith MacAdam, to discuss the leadership of the Infectious Diseases Institute. I was slightly taken aback because I did not expect another McAdam at Makerere after what had happened to his father at the hands of Idi Amin. I was nervous about the prospects of meeting a son of one of Makerere's renowned Professors of Surgery at the Medical School in the years past, and who Idi Amin and his security apparatus had humiliated before declaring him *persona non-grata* in Uganda and bundling him out of the country in less than seventy-two hours.

Therefore, given the circumstances under which Idi Amin kicked his father out of Makerere and Uganda in the early 1970s, I did not expect his son to take a keen interest in Makerere's affairs. Secondly, we were still procrastinating about where to bury his father's ashes. The old man had willed that after the cremation,

the ashes of his remains be buried in the grounds of Makerere Medical School. His son, Keith, who was then in the Gambia as a medical officer had taken the trouble to send his father's ashes to us. We had actually presented the late Professor MacAdam's wish to the University Council for clearance. In turn, the University Council had debated the pros and cons of honouring his wish, but had turned it down on grounds that the Medical School was not a designated burial ground. The University Council had instead advised that we seek permission from the Kampala City Council to have his remains buried in Kololo Cemetery alongside those of late Cornelius Welter, the mathematics professor and his contemporary. For failing to honour the dead man's wish, I had taken the rap from John Naggenda in his weekly column in the Saturday edition of *The New Vision*. By the time Keith was coming to see me, his father's ashes were still locked up in Dr Lawrence Kaggwa's drawers at Mulago. What then could one possibly say to MacAdam junior and how could one expect him to be so forgiving? When I finally met him, I realised how misplaced my fears had been. Keith was incredibly magnanimous. I could not detect any bitterness or vindictiveness in him. Our first encounter with him was extremely cordial. I guess he is one of the few people I have met who believe in the old adage of "let the bygones be bygones". Such people do not spend time indulging in what happened in the past. The future is their preoccupation.

Behind the scenes, the Academic Alliance had been courting and persuading Dr MacAdam to lead the new institute as its first Director. But by the time we met in my office in late 2003, he had not quite made up his mind whether he would accept the offer but promised that, after consulting with the family, he would get back to us with a definitive answer. Apparently, he liked what he saw and the nostalgia of returning to an institution where his late father had been part of its golden years as an African centre of excellence must have outweighed all other considerations and any lingering doubts he might have had about coming back to Uganda. Uganda was the country where he had spent a good part of his childhood. A few months later, I received news from Dr Sewankambo that Dr Keith MacAdam had accepted the offer and would be relocating to Uganda during the latter part of 2004. Since the Infectious Diseases Institute was still operating as an independent entity, the Academic Alliance was solely responsible for formalising his appointment. Shortly before I retired in 2004, I was given a guided tour of the new building, which was still under construction but was slowly approaching completion. I could not help being impressed. The equipment had started arriving and was being installed. My concern then was the state of the parking lot in front of the Department of Anatomy and the access road. Both were in a terrible state of disrepair then. The heavy trucks ferrying in the construction materials had also compounded the problem. I was just praying hard that by the time the building was ready for commissioning or dedication, we would have found some money to carry out the repairs. The new building

was officially opened in October 2004 by President Museveni, accompanied by his wife Janet, thanks to the generous financial support of one of the world's largest research-based pharmaceutical companies – Pfizer – which made another success story for Makerere possible.

### **Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation – The Generous Hand of the Microsoft Giant Comes to the Aid of Makerere in the Fight against AIDS**

If you asked people a few years ago what they knew about Bill Gates, my guess would be that, in all probability, you would get the answer – he is the founder and President or former President of Microsoft Corporation, the computer software giant. Perhaps a few, who keep abreast of the current affairs, would add that he is the richest man in the world. The technically inclined would probably tell you that Microsoft is all about Windows or its forerun DOS. I am sure a few people would say anything about the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation and what it does. Perhaps a few, who had heard about it, would still associate the Foundation with things related to computing and computer wizardry. Few people then knew that Bill Gates had set up one of the richest Foundations in the USA and the world, which in many ways had a lot to do with addressing the challenges of more earthly problems, and health being one of them. Initially, we knew very little about this new American Foundation, but being a Bill Gates initiative, word quickly spread and those of us at Makerere who had a nose for seeking financial support were on the trail. My colleagues at the Medical School had more or less perfected the art of fundraising for their research into killer diseases like HIV/AIDS – including prevention and care for the afflicted. Teaming up with their colleagues in USA through the Academic Alliance made them a powerful fundraising machinery. Apparently in their quest for money to support their huge HIV/AIDS programmes, they had approached the bosses of the new Foundation for help, and they really received plenty of help from the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation; some US\$20 million, which they had to spend in a relatively short time. In fact, as we went through the process of formalising the two-year grant agreement in 2003, I remember telling Nelson Sewankambo and Fred Wabwire Mangen that if they were not careful, they would drown in Bill Gates money. It was a lot of money to be spent in a relatively short time. I believe the total grant amounted to US\$50 million.

This time, Bill Gates and Microsoft had come to Makerere in a different form, not through the many university computers, which run on the several versions of the Windows operating system, but as a philanthropic organisation to lend us a hand in the fight against mankind's wanton killer disease. Funds provided by the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation were meant to support the work of the Academic Alliance for two years, beginning in July 2003. The grant was specifically solicited

to carry out a feasibility and pilot study designed to pave the way for a fully scaled up operation within Uganda and beyond. The Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation was interested in funding a Larger-scale project on HIV/AIDS. The emphasis of the study was on the prevention of further spread of the disease. Beyond the known, the study had to design new preventive strategies and for that reason, behavioural scientists from the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) and the Institute of Public Health and Biostatisticians had to be brought in to work alongside a team of medical scientists at Mulago and from North American universities. The pilot study focused on seven integrated components, namely messages and information campaigns; behavioural surveillance; adherence measurements in mother-to-child transmission (MTCT-plus); in-patient voluntary counselling and training; innovative Anti Retro Viral drugs delivery systems; as well as the development and implementation of innovative laboratory techniques.

This was another big shot in the arm in our struggle to reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS not only in Uganda, but in the rest of Africa. Makerere's Medical School had been a pioneer before, it was at it again, and for that I was deeply indebted to the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation. A friend in need is a friend indeed!

### **Makerere University-Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration**

In 2003, I was selected together with eight other Vice Chancellors from East and West Africa for a study tour of the top universities and research institutions on the east coast of USA, sponsored by the four partnership Foundations. During the tour, we had occasion to visit the National Institute of Health at Bethesda in Maryland, which is a suburb of Washington DC. What struck me was the extent to which Makerere Medical School was collaborating with NIH scientists. The icing on the cake for me was to discover the high esteem in which the NIH leadership took Makerere researchers, to the extent that some of them had become household names there. I was being asked about Elly Katabira, Nelson Sewankambo, David Serwadda, Fred Mangen and Phillipa Musoke, among a host of others. Dr Phillipa Musoke had just returned to Makerere after her postgraduate training at the Vanderbilt University in Tennessee. Curiously, I did not hear of any other African university researchers being mentioned. It was a good feeling to know that our problems notwithstanding, my university was making a mark on the international academic scene. I was touched. Up till then, I had not realised that in a small way, we had established a name for ourselves as credible researchers who could attract NIH funding. From the NIH, our next stop was at the prestigious and nearby Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in Baltimore, one of the top research universities in the USA our Medical School was collaborating with on some of the NIH/Forgary Foundation-funded HIV/AIDS projects. During that same visit, we spent a couple of hours at the JHU

School of Public Health. Once again during our discussions, Makerere scientists featured prominently. In a way, the talk about Makerere was becoming a little bit of an embarrassment to me, as my colleagues could only look on and listen until our hosts decided to change the topic. Incidentally, many Makerereans had studied for their PhDs at Johns Hopkins, moreover the majority of them straight from Makerere, including Dr James Ntambi, now a Professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. One of my first students, Fred Mangen, who at the time was Director of the Institute of Public Health at Makerere, had also taken his PhD in Public Health at the very same School. During our discussion, I discovered a fact I did not know: JHU and Makerere University Medical School had been collaborating for a long time.

Collaboration between Makerere and Johns Hopkins University dates back to 1988 when Dr Laura Guay came to Makerere as a Visiting Professor in the Department of Paediatrics and joined hands with Ugandan clinicians and researchers who had begun research work on the devastating HIV/AIDS disease in children. At the time, Professor Francis Miiro, a prominent Ugandan gynaecologist was one of the Ugandan clinicians investigating the transmission of the HIV from mother to the foetus in the womb. Since then, the collaboration had flourished, thanks in part to funding from the National Institutes of Health. Around 1996, the partners adopted the name MU-JHU which is short for Makerere University-Johns Hopkins University Research Collaboration, with Professor Francis Miiro as team leader on the Ugandan side, and Dr Phillipa Musoke as his fellow the principal investigator from Makerere. The first and all-purpose MU-JHU house was opened at Mulago in 2000. But as the research and services expanded, a new and bigger building became necessary. In 2004/2005, the construction of a second and slightly bigger building on the same site began, to accommodate the expanding research activities and patient care. The success of the facility lay in its turning the humble beginnings of a collaborative linkage between the two universities into an important and vibrant HIV/AIDS research and care centre in the country. It had one of the most comprehensive and advanced immunology laboratories, which was located in the new Infectious Diseases Institute. At the time, this specialised laboratory was one of the few in Africa certified by the College of American Pathologists (CAP). It was also one of the research facilities at the Medical School focusing almost exclusively on HIV/AIDS in children. The facility, with its high research scientific standards, ensured that efficient and accurate laboratory results were readily available any time they were required for both clinical care and research projects. Some of the tests conducted there were critically essential in drug toxicity monitoring. As the only CAP certified laboratory in Eastern Africa, the laboratory carried out an exhaustive range of very advanced and sophisticated HIV and immunological tests, which were essential in understanding the disease and pushing the HIV/AIDS research frontiers towards a cure, and possibly a vaccine.

From 1988 up to 2004, the MU-JHU collaboration had continued to grow with over 4,000 families participating in the research programmes and benefiting from the services provided at the facility, including comprehensive AIDS care, anti-retroviral therapy, nutritional support and counselling. The MU-JHU collaboration was a testimony to one of Makerere's enduring attributes – the ability to attract and retain its international partners. This long and successful relationship between our two universities owed so much to the scientists from both universities who made it work, and to the leadership of Johns Hopkins University that put so much trust in Makerere's ability to participate in a high-level scientific research, addressing what appeared to be an intractable medical and social problem – the HIV/AIDS pandemic. I have to pay special tribute to my colleagues in the Faculty of Medicine, led by Professor Francis Miiro, who proved that Makerere scientists had what it took to be first class researchers, even in a small clinic-cum-office in the crowded Ward 11 in old Mulago Hospital, until the project acquired more befitting facilities.

### **The Second Donors Conference at Makerere, January 2004**

As we continued to attract more and more donors, we realised that perhaps we were beginning to run into the problem of over-duplication of efforts and wasting scarce resources. We needed to improve our ability to coordinate the various partners in order to maximise the benefits from their financial and technical assistance. The solution was to organise a regular consultative forum where all parties would sit together, plan programmes and projects, discuss programme and project implementation progress, assess new and emerging needs requiring support, get to know who was funding which programme or project and by how much. In essence, the forum would be an opportunity for the university to present a progress report to the development partners on the ongoing programmes and projects and perhaps outline new funding proposals. In turn, the university would hear what its donors and partners had to say and whether they had new funding pledges to make. The forum was meant to be an annual event and would take the form of stakeholders consultative meeting, preferably held at Makerere. It would also be a gathering of all Makerere University donors and other stakeholders. It would replace the one-off Donors Conferences. As we have noted, the first donors conference to be held at Makerere was in 1987. Almost fourteen years later, in 2003, we began to plan for a second one, but this time in keeping with what I have outlined.

Towards the end of January 2004, we were ready and, on January 28, 2004 we converged in the Main Hall for a two-day consultative meeting with as many of the university's donors and stakeholders as we could marshal. Disappointingly, despite the concerted efforts to invite as many partners as we could think of, the conference was poorly attended. In spite the low turn-up, there were enough participants to hold a serious meeting. Luckily, most of the university's key donors attended.

The meeting afforded us an opportunity to brief the donors and stakeholders about the latest developments at the university. The coming into force of the new Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001, which had replaced the old Makerere University Act of 1970, was one of the most significant developments I had occasion to brief the donors and stakeholders about. At about the same time, our donors were informed of the ongoing search for a new Vice Chancellor, which had begun after the inauguration of the new Chancellor mid-January of the same year. We also took the occasion to inform our development partners and the general public about the recent research breakthrough in the prevention of mother-to-child HIV transmission, as a result of research done at the Medical School, and how the discovery had influenced the Ministry of Health to introduce a nation-wide Mother-to-Child Transmission (MTCT) health campaign and consequent service to those in need.

But above all the meeting was an opportunity to focus on the progress of the implementation of the university's Strategic Plan 2000/01–2004/05 so far and developments relating to what had been achieved, what were the failures and why, and the best way forward. It also offered us an occasion to present to our donors new funding requests. As we began to review the progress made so far, we were gratified to note the enthusiasm with which the various donors had supported the Strategic Plan.

We reviewed a report which showed that from 2000 to 2003, NORAD, Sida/SAREC, Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the World Bank had invested over US\$30 million towards the implementation of the plan. This vital support had assisted the university to reinvigorate and improve its academic programmes and expand the teaching space. It had also provided the much needed funding for research and enabled the university strengthen its staff development, notably at the PhD level and improved access for girls. We were also able to remind our partners of the key aspects of the Strategic Plan, one of which was to facilitate the ongoing reforms and transformation in the university across the board and how the reform momentum could be sustained. Their financial and technical support had been crucial in providing the impetus to continue pushing the reforms forward. A latest development we reported on but which had an indirect link to the Strategic Plan was the impact the expanded students' enrolment at the university had had on the private sector, and the emerging relationship between the university and the business community. The business community had seen in the increasing student enrolment at the university a unique business opportunity, which they had seized by constructing modern hostels within the vicinity of the university to provide accommodation for students who could not be accommodated in the university halls of residence. The university had viewed these initiatives by the private sector as positive developments. The private hostels had significantly eased the pressure on the university for accommodation. It was a development the university wished to continue encouraging.

After three years of implementing the Strategic Plan, the meeting noted that Makerere University's development strategy remained as originally formulated. The thrust was still on pursuing the plan's ultimate goal of transforming the university into an engine for the sustainable socio-economic and technological development of Uganda. Therefore, by building on the experience so far gained, the university had decided to systematically underpin this goal with six mutually reinforcing pillars, namely: balancing teaching, research and outreach; infrastructure development; reforms in the university's governance and administration; gender mainstreaming; students' welfare; and relating higher education to the needs of society. To balance teaching, research and outreach, the university was to work towards a better balance between the sciences and the humanities and ensure that members of staff engaged more in research and outreach services.

The plan's cornerstone was the university's ability to mobilise the vast resources needed to facilitate the realisation of these six pillars. In addition, the university was looking for additional resources to support its research programmes. In the Strategic Plan, the university had made research a top priority. However, we had to inform our donors that much as the university would continue to encourage innovative research in all fields, the pressing needs of the country such as poverty eradication, food security, environmental degradation, the fight against killer diseases such as AIDS and malaria, the high infant mortality and the low technological development, had started dictating that the university in collaboration with the relevant Government Ministries and Government agencies, such as the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and the National Environmental Management Authority, should begin to identify key research priorities which would assist the nation to address those needs.

At the time, we were able to take our donors and partners through what the university saw as new and emerging areas of national importance and which, by all indications, were likely to become research priorities. These included food and nutrition, agricultural value addition, biotechnology, technology development and domestication, the environment and sustainable development, lifestyle related diseases and natural resources utilisation and conservation. On infrastructure development, the meeting reminded us of the urgent need to provide additional space in response to the increasing student population but also noted with satisfaction the new buildings that had been constructed so far and the private sector initiatives, which supplemented the university's efforts. We reminded the meeting that NORAD was the only agency supporting the university's infrastructure development and pleaded that other donors should also invest some of their support in this area.

To allay the fears and reservations some donors had about the university's ability to maintain the infrastructure, we pointed out that it had started addressing the problem of poor infrastructure maintenance by setting aside five

per cent of its internally-generated income to support the maintenance fund. The meeting recommended that, as a way of encouraging the private sector to invest more in infrastructure development at the university, the Build, Own and Transfer Space (BOTS) approach should be vigorously pursued. Under the BOTS scheme, private entrepreneurs would be allowed to put up one or more buildings on any of the university's campuses on agreed lease terms. At the expiry of the lease, the university would assume ownership of the property. I made a strong appeal to our donors to provide funding for the construction of a new building for the Faculty of Technology, which was assuming a strategic importance in the technological development of the country to the nation and for the University Library expansion and a mega central computer laboratory, which would provide mass computer literacy to all students.

The two-day stakeholders' consultative meeting ended with no firm new funding commitments or offers; only pledges of continued support and statements of intent. However, NORAD accepted to consider funding a new building for the Faculty of Technology in the phase two of the Institutional Development Programme, which at the time was being negotiated. That was my last donors' conference as staff and Vice Chancellor. I just hoped that as agreed, it would become an annual event and our donors would continue to honour their commitments. I did not know that, as Vice Chancellor, I would organise one like Professor Kirya did.

### **The University's Important External Guests**

Given Makerere's long standing reputation, it does not come as a surprise that from time to time, it hosts very important and renowned personalities. They come for a variety of reasons, in part just to pay a courtesy call on the Vice Chancellor and to see the university. They also come to engage in serious intellectual discourse with staff, students and sometimes the wider public and, occasionally, to deliver public lectures. As we have seen earlier in its hey days, Makerere was renowned for its high standard public lectures. Those were days of the crowd-pulling Makerere's Ali Mazrui versus Dar es Salaam's Rodney Walter duels of word in the Main Hall. Sadly, the dark clouds of the seventies and early 1980s had thwarted that cherished tradition. The regimes of the day saw public lectures, as they did with so many other things at Makerere, as direct and unacceptable criticism and incitement for dissent. Hence, staff had decided to take cover and let the highly cherished intellectual tradition die. That changed with the change of Government in the mid-1980s when Yoweri Museveni ascended power. The tradition was revived but, sadly, it had lost the tempo and lustre of the 1960s.

In my time, we hosted several personalities who delivered powerful public lectures that covered a wide range of topical issues. Many of them engaged with staff in intellectual discourse. Here, I will give some space to the few who either

I have not mentioned before, or who merit a repetition because of who or what they were and what they said. Among the prominent political personalities I hosted, President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique features prominently. He visited in January 1997. He did not deliver a lecture, but his presence was enough. I was able to take him on a guided tour of the university, for him to see as much of good old Makerere as time could allow. After the tour, we hosted him to a small reception. His visit was followed in August of the same year by that of President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania – an old Makererian, who as we saw made a personal pledge towards the construction of an extension to the Main Library and, as a true Makererian, actually honoured his pledge. President Mkapa came with his wife in August 1997 to participate in Makerere's platinum jubilee celebrations, which as we have seen was quite a colourful ceremony. President's visit was followed by that of his immediate predecessor, former President Hassan Mwinyi in November 1997.

Earlier in June 1996, we had hosted the Duke of Abruzzi and Duchess of Aosta in Italy, in the company of the Italian Ambassador to Uganda. In the course of their visit, they opened and dedicated the Mount Rwenzori Resource Centre, part of the Department of Geography in the Faculty of Arts, and left behind a collection of photographs shot by their ancestor, who led an expedition to the Rwenzori (or Mountains of the Moon as they were then known in Europe), at the turn of the twentieth century. Late Ron Brown, then Secretary of Commerce in the Clinton Administration, was another prominent guest we hosted in February 1996. He addressed a small audience of staff, researchers and postgraduate students at the Economic Policy Research Centre about international trade and economic issues. The visit was shortly before his tragic death in a plane crash in Croatia in April of the same year. As we have seen before, Paul H. O'Neal, then Treasury Secretary in the George Walker Bush Administration, was the second US Minister to have come to Makerere during my time. He came visiting in May 2002 and delivered a well-attended public lecture in the new and beautiful Women and Gender Studies building, which was not yet officially commissioned. We were equally privileged to play host to the then President of the World Bank, Mr James Wolfenshon in 1997. He too addressed a small audience of postgraduate students in Economics, staff of the Institute of Economics and Economic Policy Research Centre in the board room of the Economic Policy Research Centre.

Perhaps, in part due to the vast distance separating Uganda and New Zealand, Makerere had had very little contact with universities in New Zealand and few Ugandans were venturing to study there, preferring to go to Australia, which was nearer. Dr Abel Rwendeire was one of the few Makerere staff to have taken his PhD in New Zealand. Late Kiwanuka of the Faculty of Law, who had also gone there for his PhD died before he could return to Uganda. So, I was pleasantly surprised to receive Dr Neils Patricia Macgregor from Massey University at

Palmerstone in the North Island of New Zealand in December 1997 to discuss possible collaboration and other interesting issues. For reasons I cannot recall, this was one of the promising linkages we failed to exploit fully. We also hosted the leaders of India's highly acclaimed institutions. Although India and Uganda had a lot in common, there was very little in the way of collaborative linkages between Makerere and the Indian universities. During his time, as Minister of Education and Sports, Amana Mushega tried very hard to link Makerere University and the Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo with the Indian Institutes of Technology (or IITs as they are popularly known).

In December 1995, as part of the Minister's effort to forge linkages with these prestigious Indian institutions, we hosted Professors R. G. Mendiratta, the Deputy Director of the IIT New Delhi and C. V Ramakreshnar, one of the Deans there. Much as we thought our Faculty of Technology stood to benefit from a linkage with the IIT New Delhi's long record as a centre of technological excellence, this was another of those linkages that failed to develop. The failure was because we could not identify a reliable source of funding.

Given Uganda's long history of being a host country to hundreds of thousands of refugees from the neighbouring countries, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has always had a keen interest in Makerere University where, over the years, scores of refugees have studied or taught as staff at Makerere, with financial support from UNHCR. The understanding between the UNHCR and the university was that refugees studying at Makerere would pay the same fees as the Ugandan students, which at first we found rather odd, but later we had to accept it as a norm. The university was extending a humanitarian gesture to the unfortunate. As a way of cementing this relationship between the university and UNHCR, and as a way of getting the Refugee Study Programme at the Faculty of Law off the ground, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms Sadako Ogata, visited the university in May 1998 during her tour of Uganda. Her visit followed on the heels of her colleague, Ms Mary Robinson, the former President of Ireland and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, one of the new UN agencies. It was a pleasure hosting her at the Human Rights and Peace Centre in the Faculty of Law.

Besides the century-old famous Royal Society of London, there are other equally well respected and prestigious learned societies outside of the United Kingdom. The Royal Society of Canada (also known as the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada) which was founded in 1882 by the Marquis of Lome and Governor General of Canada is one of them. Election to the fellowship of this Society is the highest academic accolade available to scientists and scholars in Canada. I was therefore privileged to host its President at the time, the late Professor Robert Haynes, in February 1996. In the mid-1950s, Professor Haynes, a renowned biophysicist joined a small, but significant

movement of prominent physicists who ventured out into Biology. The group included some of the top physicists like Erwin Schrodinger, arguably the father of Wave Mechanics and the Braggs (father and son who became famous for their discovery of X-ray diffraction and its application to Crystallography). I believe every student of X-ray Crystallography is familiar with the Bragg's equation. Back then, this was a significant departure from tradition. The movement had its early beginnings in Germany and Britain. This small number of pioneering physicists laid the foundations for the new discipline of Biophysics. Unfortunately, Professor Haynes died in Toronto in December 1998, two years after his historic visit to Makerere.

Elsewhere in this account, I described Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton's historical visit to Makerere and her famous speech in the Freedom Square. I will not attempt to recount her visit and what she said, but only to point out that her visit was a further testimony to the growing esteem in which the world community was once again beginning to hold Makerere University as a leading centre of higher learning in Africa. By the time she visited in March 1998, we did not have the slightest inkling that she wanted to follow her husband's path into high stake American politics and subsequently stand for and convince the New York voters to elect her to the USA Senate. Soon after being elected Senator, rumour came flying that she wanted to use her election to Senate as a springboard to have a crack at her husband's former job – to be the first woman President of the USA. If that were to happen, a return to the White House would see her switch roles with her husband. I am sure the former President Bill Clinton would follow her there, perhaps under the unassuming title of First Gentleman of America. Since this would be a precedence in the history of the USA, to have a woman as President and Commander-in-Chief, an appropriate title would have to be coined for the husband of a woman President, much in the same way as the title of First Lady is bestowed on the wife of a sitting President. It was an interesting prospect.

Besides the First Lady of the USA, I was privileged to host some high-profile Ambassadors accredited to Uganda. Ms Nancy Powell was one of the American Ambassadors to Uganda I got to know very well. Like Johnny Carson before her, she turned out to be a good friend of Makerere and the reason I have singled her out is because this was her last visit to Makerere. She had visited the university on several occasions, but this was a special visit. She was coming to bid me farewell. Although she had made an appointment, through a terrible oversight on my part on September 29, 1998, I went to Masaka for a meeting and spent a night there. Her appointment had slipped out of my mind. Fortunately, next day I started my return journey to Kampala early. I wanted to be back on my desk quickly to catch up on the previous day's work, but I could not remember the 10 o'clock appointment with Ambassador Nancy Powell on that morning of September 30. Just as I was approaching Mpigi town, some 45 kilometres from Kampala Dorcas,

one of my senior secretaries called me on the cell phone to find out whether I was aware of the appointment with Ambassador Nancy Powell that morning.

By the time Dorcas called, it was now several minutes past 10 o'clock and raining, and Ambassador Powell was in my office waiting. There was little I could do. Traffic permitting, it would take us at least an hour to get to Makerere. I apologised and asked Dorcas to pass on my apology to the Ambassador for the terrible oversight and to assure her that I was on the way coming. To my amazement, in spite of her busy schedule, Ambassador Nancy Powell chose to wait for me. She had arrived on time and there I was keeping her for over an hour. She could have gone back to her office disgusted, but she decided to sit and wait for the irresponsible Vice Chancellor who forgets important appointments. When we met, she was the first to ask me not to worry about my lateness. She then told me that she was not about to leave Uganda without saying goodbye to the Vice Chancellor and thanking us once again for successfully hosting Mrs Clinton in March that year. I was touched by her gesture, but all I could say in reply was to thank her for her support and the support of the American Government and American people to Uganda, and Makerere University in particular over the years, and also for the warmth of her friendship. I then wished her happy redeployment and finally retirement, adding that when she finally retires she should make Uganda her second home. I must say it was an emotional moment for me and I guess for her too. That was the last time I saw her.

