

UCLA

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies

Title

Crisis in Uganda: The Breakdown of Health Service edited by Cole P. Dodge & Paul D. Wiebe

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5529b6k5>

Journal

Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 15(3)

ISSN

0041-5715

Author

Kitimbo, David W.

Publication Date

1987

DOI

10.5070/F7153016984

Copyright Information

Copyright 1987 by the author(s). All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author(s) for any necessary permissions. Learn more at <https://escholarship.org/terms>

Peer reviewed

who have been perpetrating that violence.

We must keep in mind, however, the context in which the articles were written and the purpose for which they were originally published. The pieces came out during a long military struggle with obvious strategic victories. They were meant not only as explanation of those situations, but also as encouragement for supporters. For that reason, the articles are limited to the issues that were of greatest concern when they were written. It would be extremely foolish to take them as a full exposition of President Museveni's views, or as a complete statement of NRM policy.

The context in which these articles were written also accounts for their somewhat exhortatory flavor. They were originally intended to be read by people who were supportive of the NRM, to explain both the policies of the organization and the potential roles of supporters. For this reason, the reader must not expect any attempts to justify NRM goals to the unpersuaded - whether neutral or hostile. The readers must expect a brief introduction to the political vision of the author, as it has developed during the author's years in the bush. This book provides a starting point from which to track the further development of President Museveni's philosophy and NRM policies, as they are influenced by the experience of running a national government.

Lisa Halko
Graduate Student
UCLA School of Law,
Los Angeles, California.

Dodge, Cole P. and Weibe, Paul D., eds. *Crisis In Uganda: The Breakdown of Health Services*. Pergamon Press, 1985, pp. 262.

Crisis in Uganda is a unique collection of articles, written by people many of whom have been involved in the provision and organization of health and related services in Uganda. It outlines the medical and health services as they were before their breakdown during the period of military misrule of the 1970s, the problems associated with their breakdown, and the beginnings of their rehabilitation. *Crisis in Uganda*, however, does not dwell only on Uganda's dismal period. While it registers some of the experiences of the country during its "dark ages", it also throws some rays of light and hope for the future.

The book is divided into four sections. The first section is titled "Background to the Crisis". In this section, Professor Senteza Kaju

addresses the question of national integration and development in Uganda from the view point of education. He dismisses the education system which trains for only white collar jobs as inappropriate and calls for action-based, problem-solving and patriotic education. The second article by Dr. Stanley Scheyler and David Dunlop carefully traces the history of health services and developments in Uganda up to 1971 and then through the 1970s. Due attention is given to staffing, finances and options that must be considered in the development of the health sector. The last two articles of the first section are by Professors F.J. Bennett and Adolft Enns. Bennett compares the health services and health status in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, showing how different national policies and various crises have affected the delivery of health services. Bennett concludes: "The question facing Uganda is how to achieve health for all by the year 2000. Only with very careful planning will the country be able to obtain the best balance between restoring the quality of existing services while at the same time building the new structures necessary to meet the needs of the PHC (Primary Health Care) approach." (p.51). Enn's article is a lamentation: "The clocks have stopped in Uganda. Who will get the clocks in Uganda moving? Which way forward?" he grieves (p.54).

The second section contains an article on the breakdown of health services in particular settings, ranging from rural, district, right through to the national reference and teaching hospital at Mulago. Health services, however, continued to function throughout the Amin years in spite of tremendous difficulties. The morale of the health staff was nevertheless very low, and mortality and morbidity rates increased significantly. Water supply sources and sanitation services deteriorated badly, and preventive health services disappeared.

Karamoja, a region in northeastern Uganda is the focus of the third section of this book. Between mid-1979 and the end of 1980, an estimated 50,000 persons including perhaps 25,000 children starved to death or succumbed to diseases complicated by malnutrition in Karamoja. The famine drew worldwide attention and doctors, nurses, relief workers, agency heads and others agonized over and sweated in the actual provision of relief. The articles in this section identify the causes of the Karamoja famine. They document the mortality and malnutrition data and explore ways of preventing a similar tragedy in the future.

The last section of the book is titled "Perspective". The articles in this section throw some light and hope on the future. The Uganda Ministry of Health counted 924 health facilities in January 1984. These form the latent organizational and physical infrastructure in relation to

which the country's health services can be rehabilitated. The articles in this section indicate that primary health care is beginning to again take root in Uganda; baseline data on vital statistics has again been obtained from a number of areas; and the implementation of "social pediatrics" at Mulago Hospital has resulted in improvement both in the care of patients and the teaching of pediatrics. What is needed is a strong political will, finances and patriotic personnel to restore Uganda as the "Pearl of Africa".

In conclusion, *Crisis in Uganda* is highly recommended to everyone concerned with Uganda. It is both a lesson and a challenge. It calls for all Ugandans to love and work for the peace of their country and realize that participation in bringing solutions to a distressing situation is both challenging and rewarding.

David W. Kitimbo, MB., Ch. B. (Makerere);
School of Public Health,
University of California,
Los Angeles, California

Mukherjee, Ramkrishna. *Uganda: An Historical Accident, Class, Nation and State Formation*. Trenton: Africa World Press, 1979 (first American edition). 281 pages. Tables, Appendix. \$16.00 paper.

As Immanuel Wallerstein mentions in the foreword to this book, it was written between 1950 and 1955. The work must be seen, then, in light of events occurring during that time, the "last days of unapologetic colonialism" (p.iii). So, the main significance of Mukherjee's work is his criticism of all the varied justifications given by the colonialists for their rule. For historians of Uganda, and East Africa in general, the work can be seen as an historical document in itself.

Mukherjee recounts that he first went to Uganda to assist in a social study of the Acholi, interested in applying probability sampling into the investigation of this community at the request of a colleague. He began his project with two major points of initial inquiry. First, "what were the characteristics of social organization before the Uganda Protectorate was established, and what were the distinctions and interrelations among these characteristics in the scheme of social development of the human species" (p. vi). Second, "how the ethnic communities in Uganda were consolidated within the colonial regime and why the people bore the identification of Uganda Africans despite