

# Decolonizing African Education: From Stolen Narratives to Liberated Futures

## ng Justice for the Education of Africa's Children.

by Dr H Agumba



Africa Day 2025 Education conversations



Education Justice=  
Mothers courage, defiance



## The power of education in Africa's Liberation

"The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete"- **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

**Reflection:** Whats one single story you were taught about Africa that you now question?

Ludwig Krapf

The first Europeans to discover Kilimanjaro the legendary burial place of King Solomon, were two German missionaries, Johannes Rebmann and Ludwig Krapf, in 1848 ...

# Decolonising the narrative

True educational justice begins with decolonising how we think about African children's learning (Ngugi wa Thiong'o's 'Decolonising the Mind' –

## Decolonisation (Smith conceptualisation)

- Deconstruction and reconstruction
- Self-determination and social justice
- Ethics
- Language
- Internationalisation of Indigenous experiences
- History
- Critique

African epistemologies as foundation, not footnotes



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## Five Dimensions of Educational Injustice

- Access Injustice
- Quality injustice
- Cultural Injustice
- Gender Injustice
- Economic Injustice



# African Realities - Barriers to Justice

**Poverty** isn't just lack of money—it's lack of choice.

**Conflict steals education:** In the DRC, 1 in 3 schools is closed in conflict zones



TABLE 1

Out-of-school rate, by SDG region, 2021

Region	Primary school age (%)	Lower secondary school age (%)	Upper secondary school age (%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	19.9	33.2	47.8
Northern Africa and Western Asia	8.7	9.9	23.4
Central and Southern Asia	7.2	13.0	38.9
Eastern and South-eastern Asia	3.9	7.0	16.0
Oceania	6.6	4.1	20.2
Latin America and the Caribbean	3.6	6.7	19.7
Europe and Northern America	2.2	2.8	8.6
World	9.0	13.9	30.2

Source: UIS and GEM Report model estimates.

- highest out of school population
- highest population growth
- 1 in 5 children still not enrolled
- **Main challenge:** stagnated since 2010 at 33% and 48% among adolescents and youth

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Justice Beyond Access: The Crisis of Quality & Inclusion

**The Right to Education** (African Charter on the Rights of the Child) vs. the reality of **underfunded schools, teacher shortages, and gender disparities.**

**Julius Nyerere** : (Education is not a way to escape poverty; it is a way of fighting it.)



## Education Justice in Action: reviving Lusoga in Uganda

**Odora Hoppers** - indigenous knowledge isn't 'alternative'— it's foundational.

**Colonial Erasure:** Lusoga banned in schools; replaced by English/Luganda.

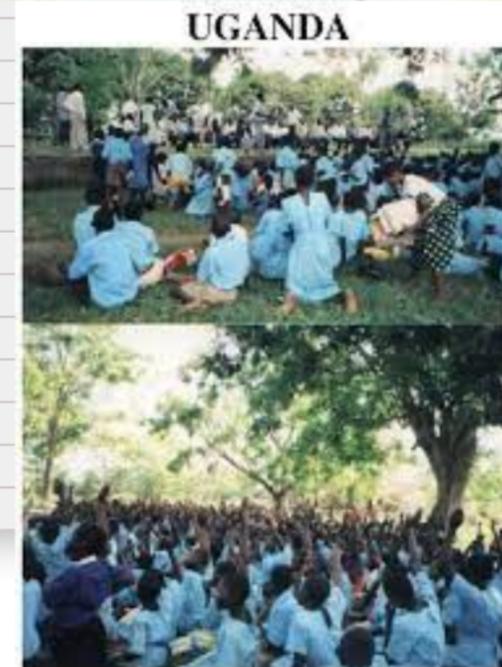
**Grassroots Revival:** Busoga elders + teachers documented oral histories (2000s).

**Policy Shift:** Uganda's 2006 law mandated mother-tongue education (P1–P3).

**Results:**

- 20% higher enrollment in Lusoga-medium schools (UNESCO, 2018).
- Better literacy scores vs. English-only peers (UNEB, 2017).

**Justice= language+Policy+ Community Action**





*Ouma Katrina is the last remaining fluent speaker of the critically endangered Njuu language.*

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## JUSTICE IN ACTION- THE PATH FORWARD

### For Policy maker

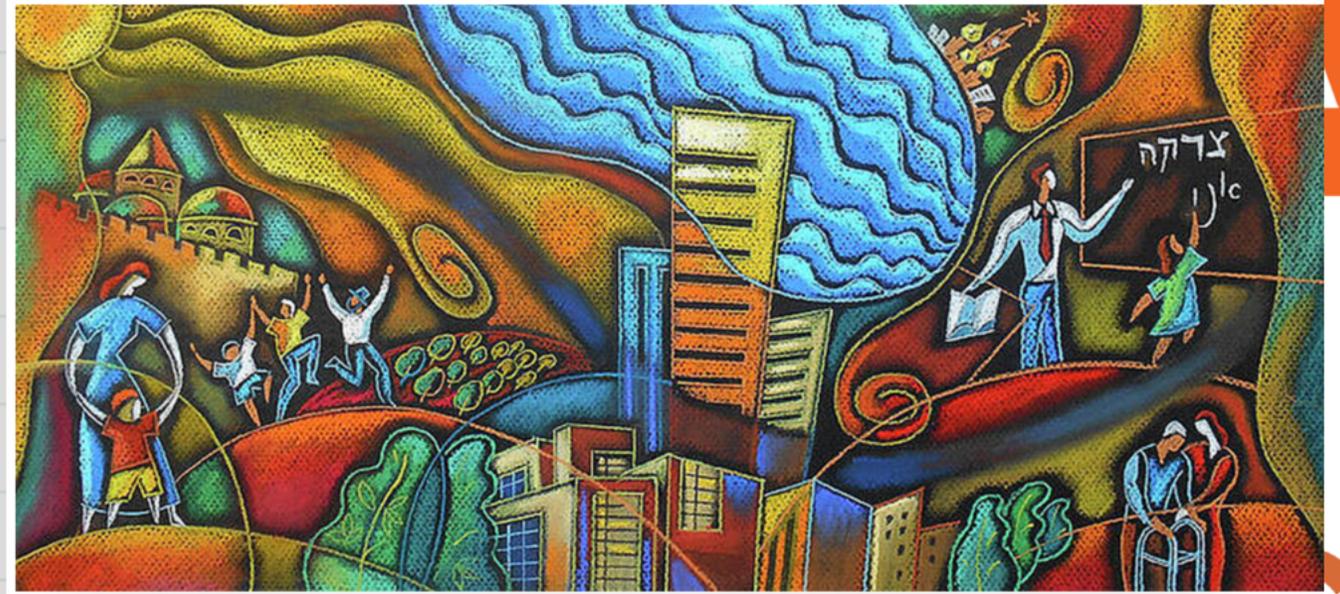
- Constitutional educational rights
- Investment justice
- curriculum transformation

### For Educators:

- Pedagogical justice
- Professional development
- Salary for teachers

### Communities:

- Ownership & Participation
- Child protection



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"Until the lion learns to write, the tale will always glorify the hunter"- African Proverb



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