## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# UNIVERSITIES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES: A CASE OF BISHOP STUART UNIVERSITY AND MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## *Mpairwe Anthony, Komurere Abigail, Atwiine Scovia and Muganga George

Faculty of Business and Development Studies, Bishop Stuart University P.O Box 9 Mbarara- Uganda

**ABSTRACT**

The study sought to assess the contribution of universities on socio-economic transformation of neighboring communities, taking a case of Bishop Stuart University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Mbarara Municipality. Using a mixed design, and being largely qualitative, the study utilized interviews with key informants, FGDs, observations and documentary reviews to collect data from a total of 56 respondents. Data was analysed by using thematic and content analysis as well as quoting verbatim narrations from respondents. The study findings revealed that universities have positively contributed to communities' socio-economic transformation. However, findings further revealed that several challenges have been encountered in the process of transformation of the communities in question. The study finally makes recommendations that can effectively bring about meaningful partnerships between the universities and the neighboring communities such that the expected roles of universities and socio-economic transformation can be realized.

## INTRODUCTION

Social transformation lies at the radical end of conceptions of social change. It implies at very least, some fundamental changes in society's core institutions, the institution and the economy, with major implications for relationships between social groups or classes, and for the means of creation and distribution of wealth, power and status (Brennan *et al.,* 2004). Universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development, the most explicit role being the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. But during periods of more radical change which may certainly have at their heart far-reaching changes in the economy, universities and/or their constituencies have sometimes played no less an important role in helping to build new institutions of civil society, in encouraging and facilitating new cultural values, and in training and socializing members of new social elites. Universities as advanced by (Dahrendorf, 2000) have entered into intimate relationships with other social institutions, which are supportive and sometimes critical. In the modern world, it calls for universities to adapt and to respond to the changing character and needs of other social and economic institutions that are frequently heard.

*Corresponding author:* **Mpairwe Anthony**
Faculty of Business and Development Studies, Bishop Stuart University P.O Box 9 Mbarara- Uganda

But what is the role of universities in bringing about wider changes in society? This is the question that this study sought to address and to do so in an empirical rather than a normative fashion. In Uganda, University Education is becoming increasingly competitive in terms of students, staff and resources (Okwakol, 2009). Because of the increasing demand for access to Education by the masses, it has shifted from being the service of elite class as it was, to a service open to the masses. Until 1987, for instance, there was only one public University (Makerere University) in Uganda with about 10,000 students and only accessed by the well offs. However, there are now other universities that were established to deliver higher education from the late 1990's on wards including Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Gulu University, Kyambogo University to mention but a few. Ugandans also have access to services of other privately established universities including Bishop Stuart University which was established in 2002. Today, there are eleven (11) public, thirty-six (36) private universities, four (4) military universities and four (4) other degree awarding institutions which are licensed by National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) all providing tertiary Education to students from both within Uganda and abroad. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Uganda downloaded on 8th February, 2018. Until 1987, University Education in Uganda was entirely a public venture. But because of the numbers of students who qualify for University education, the public sector could not meet the demand; public private partnerships (PPPs) were

introduced in the 1990s with a hope of improving the provision of services, quality and accessibility of University education. Despite the existence of PPPs in the Higher Education sector, the quality and accessibility of higher Education has continued to fall short of the stakeholders' expectations in many sub-Saharan countries including Uganda, (Kasenene, 2010). The Government of Uganda has re-affirmed its commitment to improving the quality of higher education. It has introduced two policy instruments to transform the country's higher Education system: i) The Education strategic investment plan 1998 – 2003, and ii) The Education sector strategic plan 2009 – 2015, with the aims of modernizing, diversifying and making Uganda's Education more competitive, attractive, service oriented and relevant to society and to Uganda's development goals. Despite this impressive rejuvenation, there is concern about a decline in University outreach programmes for social transformation which is attributed to the rapid and unplanned expansion of most universities in Uganda. These developments have changed the purpose of higher Education to being driven primarily by market demands, and provided a mechanism for public policy to 'regulate' individual institutional responses (Obongi, 2004). This discourse in University Education has therefore changed from a public good discourse to an efficiency discourse, and measurable quantitative aspects of professional practice have become dominant. Market forces now tend to dominate the Education for social transformation and research agendas, which leads (Mamdani, 2005) to describe the emergence of a 'mercenary learning culture' in the higher Education system. He also comments on the fact that the system of 'service' courses is beginning to break down. The result of these developments is a shift from a development-oriented mission to a market-oriented University. It was against this background that the study assessed Universities` contribution to the socio-economic transformation of the neighboring communities using Bishop Stuart University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology all found in Mbarara Municipality as a case study.

**Statement of the problem**

According to (Nasreen Fauzia, 2016). Universities play a critical role in the development and progress of societies. They not only produce human resource necessary development activities, but are also regarded as the initiators and contributors to change in societies. As such, socio-economic transformation dynamics are very much dependent on how change is managed by societies through higher education. Universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development. The most explicit role they have been allocated is the production of highly skilled labour and research output to meet perceived economic needs. However, some leading educationists have expressed opposing views on universities and the social change nexus. This study was built on the hypothesis that in the process of socio-economic transformation, universities lack development strategies to cope with several challenges associated with growth, including widening their source of funding to meet the demands that come with the changes and developments, coping with increased numbers of students and the managerial challenges that come with this transition. Much as government aided institutions receive aid from the government, it is not clear whether several programs like community outreaches are conducted to enable the institutions reach out and promote the development of the neighboring communities. The study therefore used both a public and

private University to ascertain whether universities have played any role in the socio-economic transformation of the neighbouring communities.

**The purpose of the study:** The overarching purpose of the study was to increase understanding of the various ways in which universities and other higher institutions of learning generate, contribute or inhibit social and economic transformation of their neighboring communities. This was pursued through the examination of the experiences of communities surrounding the two selected universities in Mbarara Municipality and the study sought to provide empirical evidence about the social impact of higher institutions of learning and the extent and nature of the transformations taking place as a result.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used data collected from Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Bishop Stuart University which are public and private universities respectively. The data was reinforced by findings from the key respondents (Administrators of the two universities and local leadership) and the community members who were selected from the four communities neighbouring these two institutions (Kyapotani and Rwemigina for BSU and Kashanyarazi and Kiswahili for MUST). A mixed research methodology was used and qualitative research methods were adopted. Purposive sampling technique was used to select LCI Chairpersons because of the positions they hold in the community, University Administrators were selected using convenient sampling technique while simple random sampling technique was used to select local community members because they were many and each one of them had an equal and independent chance to participate in the study. A total of 56 respondents was used which generated reliable data that was used to draw conclusions about the study phenomenon. Interviews were administered to the University Administrators (from the two selected universities), and the village/local council Chairpersons from the four selected cells neighbouring these universities while Focus Group Discussions were administered to community members of the neighbouring communities to get the in-depth information about how these universities have contributed to the socio-economic transformation of the neighboring communities. These helped to generate reliable data since there was direct interaction with the respondents

Data was analyzed manually whereby field notes from the interviews were written down during the course of these interviews. Data was later edited at the end of each day and transcribed to ensure accuracy. Themes were clearly identified and put in coding categories. A scheme of analysis was worked out following these coding categories and using quotations on most occurring ideas. The interview schedule was translated in local languages for proper clarity and comprehension.

## RESULTS

This section is divided into four sub-sections; demographic characteristic of the respondents, the key development expectations and roles of the University to the neighbouring communities, the contribution of the University in the transformation of the neighbouring communities and the strategic measures of promoting University-community partnership using Mbarara University of Science and

Technology and Bishop Stuart University all found in Mbarara municipality.

***Demographic characteristics of respondents:*** This section discusses the demographic characteristics related to the size and structure of the study population. The results highlight information about sex of respondents, religion, marital status, education levels, and number of years spent in the area among others. A big number of respondents were males accounting to 58.7% as compared to 41.3% for females. This is because, men were easily mobilized by their area chairpersons as majority were found in the nearby trading centres at the time of the interview compared to their female counterparts. Also, majority 41.3% of respondents were Anglican, followed by Muslims 37%. Catholics made up only 17.4% while the least number were the Pentecostals with only 4.3 %. This is a mixed society where most religions were represented. On the highest level of education attained, a big number 32.6% had no formal education, followed by the two categories of those with higher and primary education levels both contributing to 34.4 %. The least number 19.6% had attained secondary education. Respondents were found to have been participating in different occupations. Majority of them, 39.1% were engaged in businesses, followed by subsistence farmers or just peasants 28.3%, followed by politicians 17.4% such as counsellors and LC chairpersons and the least were civil servants comprising only 15.2 %. Findings on marital status indicated that the highest number of respondents, 74 % were married while only 13% were single. Only 8.7% were widowed and the least 4.3% were divorced or separated. Finally, findings on the number of years spent in a given community, majority had lived in the study areas for over eleven years represented by (82.6%) while the rest had stayed in their communities for a period between 1-5years (8.7%) and 6-10 years (8.7%) respectively. Having many respondents who had lived in the same communities for more than 10 (ten) years made it possible to collect enough and reliable data regarding the socio-economic transformation of communities and the situation that existed before the universities were set up.

***The key development expectations and roles of the University to the neighboring community:*** One of the objectives of the study was to document the key development expectations and roles of the University to the neighbouring community. It was found out that, all the respondents from the selected neighboring communities reportedly agreed that, there are a number of services they expected to get from the University. One of the services mentioned was education. From the FGDs conducted with community members, majority respondents reported that, they expected the University to provide education services to their children. For example, from the Focus Group Discussions conducted in Rwemigina, one of the neighbouring communities to BSU, one of the respondents said,

> *When the University started, I thanked God because I realized that I was going to educate my children in the neighbourhood since I never had enough money to take my children to other universities like Makerere and Kyambogo… This is because those universities require a lot of money for example paying tuition and transport costs. (FGD with community members, August, 2017)*

Such a statement indicates that, the existence of such institutions within their communities is a blessing to the residents who may be having little money to support their children`s education from far institutions because of the related expenses like transport fares, accommodation fees, feeding costs which is mostly expensive in big cities like Kampala among others. Such findings are in line with what Ali [9] stressed on that, the special role of open universities is to make education accessible and prevent the issues of education which are promoting social inequality. In addition, the [10] stresses that, "As the country grew and evolve, higher Education provides learning opportunities not only for the children of the old elites, but also to those of foreign and rural immigrants and poor urban dwellers. Provision of jobs to the local residents was also mentioned as another key development expectation from the universities. Respondents mentioned that they expect to get jobs from the universities both for the educated and the uneducated. It is however important to note that, the jobs that were mostly offered to the locals are for support staff/casual labour which do not require formal education while few are taking up office jobs. As noted from an interview with one of the administrators, it was commented that,

> *We normally advertise in newspapers, on the website, noticeboards and we expect all people to read the advertisement and apply. Whoever is shortlisted is subjected to an interview and whoever passes the interview is given a job regardless of who he/she is and where they come from. We know what the residents expect to get from the University but they have to be subjected to the same procedures like any other person. We have staff who are working with us and who come from the neighborhood as our support staff. (KI interview, August, 2017)*

These findings are in agreement with [11], who stressed that, Institutions of higher learning have greatly affected their surrounding communities and many universities and colleges undertake these studies to achieve this economic impact. The most obvious manner in which universities and colleges affect their local economy is through employment and direct purchase of goods and services from the neighbouring communities. From the FDGs with the residents of MUST, neigbouring communities of Kiswahili and Kashanyarazi reportedly mentioned medical services or treatment of diseases as one of their key development expectations from the same University. Respondents reported that MUST, because of housing a teaching hospital, they expect to get special considerations when it comes to medical service delivery like treatment of their ailments since they believed that good health is a key to development. In an interview with the University administrators from MUST, they reported that, residents expect to get free medical treatment. Even when the patients are required to make some tests outside the hospital premises/facilities, they tend to resist claiming that they do not have money. In addition to that, residents reportedly mentioned access to the social amenities from the University like water, electricity, security and markets for their produce from the University community. This was found out most especially from the residents of Rwemigina cell, one of the neighbouring communities of BSU in an exclusive discussion with the community members and the local leadership who reported that, they sometimes lack water while there is "free" water in the University which is not being consumed but the security officers cannot allow them to fetch water from the University tanks. Other social amenities like security and markets for their products were also mentioned. In line with this argument, (Nasreen Fauzia, 2016), stressed that, universities do and can play a constructive role in promoting public good, service

1723

*Mpairwe Anthony et al. Universities and socio-economic transformation of neighboring communities:*
*A Case of bishop Stuart University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology*

delivery and in meeting various challenges affecting communities including the Millennium Development Goals. If developing countries have to graduate to the levels of advanced countries, socio-economic transformation has to be steered in a way that they promote prosperity, development and peace in these societies. It is, therefore, crucially important to understand the different ways in which universities or higher education institutions generate, contribute or inhibit social, economic and political changes. On the issue of education, respondents were mostly concerned with the education of their children who have not reached the level of the University. Respondents mentioned improvement on the standards of the neighbouring institutions like primary schools in the area which are of low standard. A case of BSU, respondents mentioned that, if the University can improve on the level of education at Bishop Stuart Demonstration Primary School to the level of 1st class schools. It was also discovered that, improving its standard and possibly elevating the school to a secondary level would enable the University students to carry out their school practice from there hence saving transport cost and time while searching for school practice placements. In this respect (Ali Anuwar, 2010), identified the following goals for education institutions as; Creating growth and improved conditions for communities through human capital development, enabling communities to use education and knowledge acquired for creating public good, generating knowledge to drive and transform the community and promoting public interest that would inter alia result in improving lives and productivity [ibid].

***The contribution of the University towards the socio-economic transformation of the neighbouring community:***
The study further established the contribution of the University towards socio-economic development of the neighbouring communities. Respondents wholesomely agreed that universities have had a great contribution in improving the standards of living of the people living in the neighbouring communities. The study therefore identified the following as the major contributions of the universities to the socio-economic transformation of the neighbouring communities.
Provision of employment opportunities to the neigbouring residents was mentioned as one important contribution. It was mentioned from the focus group discussions conducted that the universities have provided jobs to their children as the case of BSU. In regard to this point, it was discovered from one University administrator (University Bursar, BSU) that, students who excel in academics are always maintained in different offices as teaching staff or administrators. The University official reportedly said,

*Our students who excel in their academics are usually retained by the University. A case in point is the staff in the finance section that exceled in their studies were retained and are now working as accountants and cashiers and they are doing a great job. We even have staff in the academics who are now lecturers and teaching assistants because they were retained after excelling in their studies. (Ki interview, August, 2017)*

The statement is a total reflection of the University`s commitment to improve the livelihoods of the people. In addition, respondents from Kashanyarazi also reported that residents in the area are working in the University (MUST) as cleaners, office attendants, administrators and lecturers basing on their level of education and possession of relevant qualifications. As earlier stated, (Rebuck Michael, 2003), is in agreement with the finding by stating that, the most obvious manner in which universities and colleges affect their local economy is through giving employment opportunities to the local people and the direct purchase of goods and services from the neighbouring communities. He adds that Universities and colleges also act on their neighborhoods in indirect ways, such as by developing their real estate which in turn provides jobs to the locals. Respondents commended universities for their contribution towards extending electricity to the community around. From the FDG conducted, it was realized that residents appreciated the fact that the University (BSU) allowed them to access electricity from their line which would have been expensive for them if they had to access it on their own. Business in the area has been improved as people earn some income through their small businesses like saloons, shops and milk dairie*s*. This is because, the University has increased the population in the area and people have gained income from hostels through renting to the students and staff. Also, selling agricultural products to the students like beans, Matoke, and ground nuts, people are now sure of getting income from their produce which was not the case before. This was evident in almost all the four communities selected. In addition, it was found out that, the University has improved the standards of living of the people in the surrounding areas for example presence of improved and standardised structures (hostels) around the two Universities (refer to appendix 1). This argument is in line with what (Cortes, Alvaro 2004), found out when he carried out a study among five universities in the United States, and found out that, Universities have both a direct and an indirect impact on real estate in their surrounding neighborhoods through housing development partnerships, direct expansion, and through campus generated externalities. For example, these effects can increase the desirability of a neighborhood by increasing the number of educational events offered [ibid]. The University (BSU) has also contributed a lot in increasing the value for land and community members have sold their land thus increasing on their income. Some residents have improved their standards of living from selling their land and constructing permanent houses. This was discovered in a discussion with the residents of Rwemigina and Kyapotani cells where by members appreciated the presence of the University for improving the value for land in their communities. As was noted by the lower local council official;

*In the last ten years, a 50 ft. by 100 ft. plot of land in this area was between one to four millions, but now without between twenty-five to thirty-five millions, you cannot get a plot of land, depending on location. (FGD with LCI C/Person, Rwemigina central cell, August, 2017)*

This was confirmed by the University administration whereby, the University secretary (BSU) added her voice on the improvement of the value of land in the neighborhood. During FGDs that were conducted in Kashanyarazi and Kiswahili cells the neighbouring communities of MUST, respondents reportedly noted that the value for land has greatly increased due to high competition from the outsiders and the University staff who wish to do business in the area and also rent houses/hostels for accommodation. The study findings are in agreement with (Nasreen Fauzia, 2016), who stressed that, Universities play a critical role in the development and progress of societies. They not only produce human resource necessary development activities, but are also regarded as the initiators and contributors to change in societies. As such,

socio-economic transformation dynamics are very much dependent on how change is managed by societies through higher education. He adds that, Universities have frequently been regarded as key institutions in processes of social change and development for transformation. There was also an improvement in infrastructure like roads, and buildings. For example, residents of Kyapotani and Kasengenge neighbouring communities of BSU appreciated the fact that the introduction of a University in the area has come along with many developments. This was a realization of improvement in the road network because the road from town to the University [BSU] was tarmacked to enable easy access to the University by both the students and other community members. In addition, the standards of living have also improved; people have built quality structures which attract the students. Besides, the University restricts hostel owners from renting houses in poor shape to their students as they put the life of students at stake. In line with this finding, Cortes agrees that, Universities indirectly impact their surrounding neighborhoods through the effects of their partnerships and by attracting a distinct population. Many municipalities recognize the influence of universities and universities are occasionally regarded as important players in a city's and community's development plans (Cortes, 2004).

Also, residents were asked about whether they have gained anything from the University programs and they agreed to have gained in some of the programs like community outreaches, graduations and spiritual aspects like the preaching of the word of God. Community members around BSU mentioned about students of Social Work, and Public Health who normally move around the community sensitizing people on issues concerning sanitation and hygiene, small scale businesses, formation of informal groups which would help them develop. One of the members was quoted saying that,

*Social Work students from BSU visited our community in 2016 and taught us how we can improve our hygiene and sanitation. They gave us items like soap, salt, sugar, posho among others. We actually appreciate their work because we normally see them on television visiting communities where they give them help so we realized it`s not only us but also other areas that are visited and helped by students from BSU.*(FGD with community members of Rwemigina Central Cell, August, 2017).

In addition, it was also realized that, the nursing students of MUST also have similar outreach programs to the community whereby, they move to different communities giving free counselling services, HIV testing, treatment of minor illnesses among others. The University has budget allocations for community outreaches at the faculty level to enable students go out and show case what they study. The University bursar commented;

> *We have budget allocations for community outreaches at the faculty level and each department has got its own vote to spend in a semester. This is done to enable courses that do more of community work to have access to their clients for example, students of social work do more of community work than classroom work and I think that's why they often move out more than others. (KI interview with University Bursar, August, 2017)*

**Possible ways of promoting University-community partnership to bring about socio economic transformation and development:** This was yet another objective that guided the study. The study sought to establish the respondents` views on what should be done to promote University-community partnership for social transformation and development. Respondents suggested that, the Public Relations Officers should always carry out a survey in the community to identify students in need of education at the University level so that measures can be put in place to help them attain university education. It was suggested that, the university should introduce the work-study policy where a student can be allowed to work for the institution during holidays as he /she accesses education when the semester begins. This would help the residents to access University education within their means possible. [13], suggested that the university should first of all aim at mobilising and combining university knowledge and community experience to address social disadvantage and exclusion, to promote the idea of a fair society. Secondly, it should complement and collaborate with the university's service to business activities by focusing on all those areas of our daily lives that are of profound material and civic importance but which are typically seen as "non-economically productive activity", such as caring sustainable development, self-management of health and well-being, voluntary activity and the development of citizenship.

In order for the university to bring up socio-economic development to the neighbouring communities, the University should start up a fully-fledged health center (BSU - Community Hospital) where the residents can pay some little and affordable amount of money in order to access the health services in a shortest possible time and distance. This would also help the University nursing students to get clients for their internship exercise than going for internship in Mbarara University Teaching Hospital and other hospitals which is sometimes costly to the students and the university. It was also suggested that Universities should always hold meetings with the local leadership and community members so that their views can be incorporated in the formulation of the University policies and programs as they are also affected by those policies and programs in their communities. This is because, it was realized that both universities have their students who stay in the hostels outside the University premises and if the local community is not involved in planning for the students, it sometimes brings out mix-ups between the institution, the students, the hostel owners and the community. Involving the local leadership in decision making would help the institution authorities to know the issues and challenges faced by students in the hostels so that measures can be looked for before things get out of hand. For example, in an interview with the chairman Kiswahili cell a neighbouring community to MUST, it was realized that the University does not bring the local leadership on board when making decisions. He had this to say:

> *The University does not bring us on board when making decisions and yet we are the custodians of their students. When a student commits an offense in the area, for example, we have nowhere to take him or her in the University because we do not know the office concerned with students' discipline. So we find ourselves forced to take the student to the police even on minor cases. If the local leadership would be fully involved, some of the minor*

*cases would be solved without going to the police. (KI interview with LC I Chairperson, August, 2017)*

The researchers agreed with the findings because involving the local leadership in decision making would be the only way to bring about peaceful co-existence. Therefore, the University should involve the local leadership in some of the University meetings especially those that affect the students, hostel owners and the community to avoid such mistakes. In relation to the above finding, [ibid], in their book "The Engaged University" stressed that, Universities that develop serious and fully strategic programs of community-university engagement significantly extend the membership of their university communities and do so in ways that add greater colour and richness to their existing teaching and research programs, as well as providing tangible benefits to their local communities. Provision of enough security to the students was also mentioned. This is because, it was discovered that students were being robbed of their property at the small lower gate of Bishop Stuart University because of poor security at that gate. In the same instance, it was discovered that students of MUST who stay in Kashanyarazi and Kiswahili cells were being affected by the same problem since they have no security lights along the way to their hostels. Therefore, respondents suggested that both institutions should provide tight security measures to protect students and their property especially ladies who are at the risk of being raped along the way going to their hostels at night. From the Focus Group Discussion conducted in Rwemigina cell, members appreciated the relationship between the University and the community by employing some of the residents as casual laborers where they earn a living. They however pointed out that, the number should be increased so that even the educated ones can access jobs from the institution in order to improve their community. On the other hand, residents of Kyapotani cell showed concern over the issue of segregation and employing people basing on their religions. Members claimed that the University does not employ Moslems and yet the area is largely dominated by Moslems. Residents suggested that, the University should stop the habit of segregation and employ residents if they qualify for such jobs without looking at their denomination. This will automatically strengthen the relationship between the University and the neighbouring communities.

***Challenges that have been encountered in the promotion of University-Community partnerships:*** The study further highlights the challenges that were encountered by the universities in the process of promoting partnerships with the neighbouring communities. It was discovered that, there is no well streamlined partnership between universities and the neighboring communities. This challenge was reported by the community members who did not see any good relationship/partnership with the universities. According to one LC I chairperson of Kashanyarazi cell;

*The partnership between this community and the University (MUST) is more or less non-existent. As far as I know, there is no formal system in place that we can use or base on to approach the University officials in case a need arises. Sometimes we get stuck and we don't know where to start. At times we get issues with students as reported by some land lords who get challenges collecting rent from students but because these institutions are 'hard to approach,' some cases go unresolved and this is not good for us as leaders. Things would have been a little easier if*

*the partnership was clear. (KI interview with LC I Chairperson, August, 2017)*

In order to get more information about the same issue of partnerships, the same case was put to University administrators of MUST to have their say. One administrator however had a different view. It was reported that the partnerships are there, may be if we talk about inferiority complex of some of our community members. He reportedly noted that:

*We are in close collaboration with the communities around. We normally work with the LC/municipal leadership. We normally invite area leaders and hostel owners in our meetings, and functions like graduation and other church related functions…. inferiority complex among some of the community leaders may be their challenge. They look at us as a University who operate everything in English and so they at times see themselves unable to conduct or transact any business since they cannot speak and understand the language (English). (KI Interview with a University Administrator, August, 2017)*

There have also developed cases of Insecurity. A challenge of University ladies falling into traps of rape have increased, cases of murder have also emerged where many of these cases have been aired on some radio and television channels. Others are related to theft. Community members were quick to report that it is a common practice to have many theft cases when students are on session. So, they don't suspect any other person else to be involved in this vice other than students. That's why community members were calling upon universities to become more vigilant and help to emphasise the issue of promoting security by working with police posts around and install security lights. This would help everybody in the same community to have a secure community where people live happily and in harmony. Increasing substance abuse like marijuana, mirungi and alcohol along with noise making were also reported where students have been victims and universities cannot prevent such vices alone without the concerted efforts of the community members. In agreement with the finding, Cortes further stresses that Universities have had both direct and indirect impact on the surrounding neighbourhood whereby a university can create negative effects if, for example, new student housing leads to a large increase in noise complaints in an adjacent neighborhood. Universities indirectly impact their surrounding neighborhoods through the effects of their partnerships and by attracting a distinct population which may come along with different vices, [12].

**Conclusions**

University education continues to be hailed as an important tool through which neighboring communities can benefit. From the number of services and programs that universities offer, and also depending on the relationships and partnerships that the two bodies (universities and communities) may have and build, communities do benefit a lot. As noted from the findings, evidence from the communities visited and the key informants interviewed, it was revealed that, the two universities (BSU and MUST) offer different programs and services that have been reflected through the developments enjoyed in the communities that neighbour these institutions. A part from some issues that tend to hamper effective

collaborations between the two universities and their neighbouring communities like lack of a streamlined legal framework, the contribution of such universities to the transformation of communities around them was great. Infrastructural development and improvement both in quantity and quality of services in the communities was noted. Because of assured market for the services like food products, general merchandise, bodaboda operators, the appreciating value of land, access to University education, opening up and construction of access roads- both marram and tarmac and descent/standardized housing were all attributed to the two universities in their neighbouring communities by the residents and the University administrators. Therefore, realizing a meaningful socioeconomic transformation of the communities around these universities can only be achieved if there are effective collaborations where each party respects and facilitates the efforts of the other. It should however be noted, that University-community partnerships received mixed feelings. Community members were not confident of the partnerships that may be there, while some University leaders reported that the partnerships were there, with some reasons. This couples with other challenges that are being met along the way in the socio-economic drive of promoting University programs and projects in the communities such as inadequate budget provisions.

## Recommendations

The study therefore recommends the following if the Universities are to bring about meaningful socio-economic transformation and development to the neighboring communities:

- Encourage partnership building between universities and the communities. Leaders/municipal council leadership can help to approach University leadership and forge a way on how they can bridge any gaps that may be existing. This can help the two bodies in planning together, say on the nature and style of hostels to build and invite either party to engage in the meetings that they normally hold.
- Sensitization of the community members through holding community dialogues. Community members can be sensitized about the operation of the University,

the existing offices and officers and their roles, the programs on offer and what the University expects from them. This can help demystify the inferiority complex that some of the community members may be having and feel easy to approach universities and make any enquiries or register their complaints if need arises.

## REFERENCES

Ali Anuwar 2010. *Developing the community: The role of Universities and Open and Distance learning.* India, 24-28 November 2010.

Brennan, J. King, R. and Lebeau, Y. 2004. *The Role of Universities in the transformation of Societies - An International Research Project: Synthesis Report,* London

Cortes, Alvaro. 2004. *"Estimating the Impact of Urban Universities on Neighborhood Housing Markets*: An Empirical Analysis." *Urban Affairs Review*.

Dahrendorf R. 2000. *Universities after Communism. The Hannah Arendt Prize and the Reform of higher education in East Central Europe.* Hamburg, Korber-Stiftung.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Uganda downloaded on 8th February, 2018).

Kasenene E.S. 2010. *Improving the effectiveness of public and private Education in Sub-Sahara Africa: The case study of Uganda.* NHCE, Kampala.

Mamdani, M. 2005. *Thinking through the University Education Reform, 1989–2005. Unpublished internal discussion document,* Makerere University, Uganda.

Nasreen Fauzia 2016. *The role of universities in socio-economic transformation*. A Quarterly magazine for a discerning readership. Posted on January 14, 2016 in VOL 10 NO 2.

Obongi, O. 2004. *Academic dilemmas under neo-liberal Education reforms: A review of Makarere University*, Uganda. Dakar, Senegal. CODESRIA.

Okwakol M.J.N. 2009. *The Need for Transformative Strategic Planning in Universities in Uganda. NCHE Journal Kampala*

Rebuck Michael 2013. The Economic Impact of Institutions of Higher Learning.

Watson, David, et-al 2012. *Engaged University: International perspectives on civic engagement*. London: Routledge.

World Bank, 2002. *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education*, Washington DC: The World Bank.

## Appendix 1

Some of the improved hostels from the neighborhoods of Rwemigina and Kiswahili cells.

**Improved hostels around BSU**

**Improved hostels around MUST**



\*\*\*\*\*\*\*