

With the rise of collaborative development interventions and the Global momentum around Sustainable Development Goals, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an exciting time to engage in International Development. In pursuit of sustainable development, we have registered an increase in economic growth, good health whereas illiteracy, under-5 mortality rates and other ills are declining globally. However, even with the high influx of these development programmes, inequality between rich and poor, the Global North and Global South is widening instead of narrowing. A M.Sc. Development Management programme at the London School of Economics and Political Science will introduce me to the necessary tools for dealing with the practical problems of managing development to make a positive impact in the world.

I attended primary school with many of my friends, mostly girls in Uganda's district of Kabale. Whereas we excelled during our earlier years of education, the trend changed in upper primary. I watched my sisters and female friends fall victim to teenage pregnancies and drop-out of school, one-after-another. In Uganda, the teenage pregnancy rate stands at 25% and is the leading cause of school dropouts (UDHS 2016). This predicament pained me and promised myself to pursue a career to improve women's lives.

To start with, I promoted equality in education. As a teacher of English language and Literature at Kamwezi Vocational Institute in 2014, I observed that absenteeism and low performance were higher among girls than boys. Upon further inquiry from female students, I learnt that lack of sanitary pads and unhygienic school washrooms compelled them to miss lessons whenever they experienced their menstrual flow. I shared my findings with senior female teachers and the school administration. Furthermore, I liaised with the senior teachers to persuade the headteacher to renovate the washrooms, designate a special changing-room for girls experiencing menstruation and provide emergency sanitary pads. This intervention resulted in a 40% increase in girls' classroom attendance and increased overall academic performance.

In order to find more opportunities for improving girls' and women's status beyond the confines of the school environment, I joined Kigezi Women in Development as Projects Officer. In this role, I collaborated with Village Health Teams and other Civil Society Organizations to collect 2,306 signatures to petition the area Member of Parliament Hon. Wilfred Niwagaba and Kabale District Local Council to renovate the facility<sup>1</sup>. As a result, in July 2018, £70,000 was appropriated by the district for renovating the theatre and constructing staff houses. This resulted in improved quality of maternal and child health services. Maziba Health Centre now conducts on average 20 lifesaving caesarean deliveries monthly.

Despite these and more achievements, I have got to the highest I can without formal education in development management. My capacity in designing and managing more inclusive and sustainable programmes is wanting owing to the fact I do not have an academic background in development management. The programme will give me the theoretical and practical knowledge to drive development and equip me to understand why some societies have succeeded and others have failed. In line with this, I desire to advance my skills in research, design, and implementation of development interventions.

My ambition is to become a development management expert with a focus on gender equality and women empowerment to enhance the socio-economic and political status of women nationally and globally. Uganda has a Gender Development Index (GDI) value of 0.531, ranking at 127 out of 162 countries in the 2018 index<sup>2</sup>. Being among the 40 countries with the lowest GDI shows that few women are participating in socio-economic development. Like Secretary-General António Guterres, I firmly believe that gender equality and women's rights are fundamental to global progress on peace and security, and human rights. I look forward to using the professional and personal skills and knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> <https://chimpreports.com/ndorwa-residents-petition-kabale-district-speaker-over-health-centre/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr\\_theme/country-notes/UGA.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/UGA.pdf)

*Liberty Christopher's Statement of Purpose for M.Sc. Development Management*

I will acquire at LSE to contribute to design, implement and manage development interventions geared towards protecting and promoting women's rights, dignity, and leadership.

A M.Sc. Development Management Programme at LSE will support me to actualize my career goal. The *Development Management* module fascinates me because it will guide me to explore the causes of development, identify the barriers, and evaluate solutions. Through the *Globalization, Gender, and Development* module, I anticipate to understand the theories and practices in the field of gender and development. It will also enhance my gender perspectives, and the difference it makes in international development, thereby equipping me to create more gender-inclusive development.

Through the LSE's Firoz Lalji Center for Africa, I hope to gain networks and skills to solve development challenges in Africa by utilizing their innovative research. This research will empower me to deliver more effective programmes especially in Africa. Similarly, I am interested in the real-world consultancy project with leading development agencies such as World Bank, GIZ and Oxfam from which I will gain practical experiences in managing development. Studying at LSE will further allow me a membership at the London International Development Center (LIDC), a leading network of International Development researchers. LIDC membership will present opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration in global development. While studying at LSE, I will not only attend research seminars and public lectures by world leaders but also enjoy the cultural facilities in London.

Importantly, through studying this programme, I will interact with International students from different fields and be mentored by outstanding faculty, among whom are Professor Naila Kabeer whose research in gender, poverty, social exclusion, and livelihoods aligns with issues I find compelling in the development field.

Post-study, I plan to establish a non-profit organization that engages men as champions of gender equality and women empowerment. Men have not participated enough in conversations that regard gender equality, yet they are crucial to the achievement of this goal. This non-profit will not only include men in discussions and interventions that foster gender equality but also rally men to support women to undertake various socio-economic and political endeavours to move us closer to SDG 5 -gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls.