

## **Anglican Clergy-Laity Pension Scheme: Investment Opportunity for Uganda Christian University to Walk the Dream – ‘A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa’**

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### ***Abstract***

*Social security pension scheme, a mercantile investment approach to accumulate funds to meet the financial needs of people in their old age is a phenomenon that has been in existence since days ancient. Accordingly, this scholarly article examines the trends of social security pension schemes since precolonial Uganda. Centrally, the article examines the pivotal role Uganda Christian University can play to influence Clergy and Laity in the Anglican church of Uganda to save funds for their old age life survival and how the academic institution can utilize the accumulated savings to influence academic institution programmes expansion and financial sustainability. In order to attain insights on how the Ugandan society has been supported to engage in old age savings, haphazard sampling, participant observation, and historical analysis approaches were relied on. Study findings indicate that during precolonial Uganda, traditional social security mechanisms were the vibrant means through which the vulnerable groups of society were communally offered support. When the British took over, statutory social service pension schemes, parallel to those in Europe, were introduced. Since then, European transplanted old age savings schemes benefit only Ugandans enrolled in the formal and private employment sectors. For the majority workforce in the informal employment sector, although dotted social investment groups have formularised their voluntary savings schemes, there are no clear legislated systems that hold them accountable to save funds regularly to cater for their old age financial needs. Hence, in the Anglican church of Uganda fraternity, it has been brought to light that, if Uganda Christian University leadership, takes on Clergy-laity pension scheme management, then: a) the vision of the Anglican Church of Uganda – ‘A Faster Growing Sustainable Christ-Centered Church,’ will be tangible, and b) the academic institution will be at the cutting edge dream walk – ‘A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa’.*

**Key Words:** Church, Clergy, Laity, Pension, University

### **1. Introduction**

Social security pension schemes are old-age capital accumulation plants that vary depending on the cultural context. No earthly society exists without constructed formal or informal old age survival mechanisms. The formal social security pension schemes that are in existence are rooted in the ancient Roman Empire, which legislated policies to support officials discharged from military service with sustainable old age household incomes. However, the pension scheme initiatives flagged off by the Roman Empire came to demise during the Middle Ages. In the wake of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, pension schemes were reactivated by employee associations, religious institutions, charity organisations, and state organs. Since then, pension schemes have undergone innovative modifications worldwide (Fundación MAPFRE, n.d).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, pension schemes were a benefit skew of colonialists and missionaries who were paid from overseas coffers and afterwards, locally generated revenues. As time rolled, the scheme was extended to the European-trained African civil servants. However, the African indigenous labour force in the private and informal sectors survived on daily rations tossed by their domestic employers. When old age set in for the Africans, they retired to be taken care of by their relatives and a network of friends. Certainly, those who had not invested in their relatives and friends by providing them with life survival vocational skills, they met their earthly send-off demise disgracefully (World Bank Group, 2019, p.2).

Besides African old age social survival networks, studies indicate that not all people who earn a living during their prime days save and invest funds to meet their old age needs. In the year 2009, statistics revealed that 85 percent of the global population, aged 65 and above, had no retirement benefits and their evening earthly life tenure was miserable (Stewart & Yermo, 2009, pp.4-5).

Wholesomely, on the global scene, 32.5 percent of prime age workforce subscribe to pension schemes and in Sub Saharan Africa, the number is laughable, thus, the continent is rated at 8.9 percent (Nyang'oro & Njenga, 2022, p.1). It has been observed that most social security systems in Africa are designed to cover a special class of people in the formal employment. Those involved in informal employments have no old age benefit fall back survival (International Social Security Association, 2023).

In East Africa, unlike Kenya with a coverage of 15 percent, less than 10 percent of the populations are covered by social security pension schemes. Other than voluntary driven self-employed group initiatives, studies conducted in the year 2014, found that legislative arrangements to cover workers in the informal sector in East African countries were none existent. Under such conditions, elderly people tarsal with chronic poverty and many succumb to death due to their inability to access quality medical care (Szczepański & Turner, 2014, pp.237-237).

Essentially, old age social protection is a pivotal concern for organised leadership systems in the world to safeguard the sanctity of old people, whose prime age contributions have had an impact on society. As human beings walk towards the evening of their earthly life, the finishing time space comes along with many life demands that, if not well handled, leave irreparable damage on society. Old age is associated with disease complications and basic life demands that in most cases,

extended family members and old friends are constrained to support. Without consistent income inflows, iconic old people parish with vast experiences very much needed by the young population to feed on to energise a better tomorrow (Nyang'oro & Njenga, 2022, p.2).

Resource mobilisation, then, to ensure that individuals face old age with less traumatic emotional stress, is an adventure that cannot be taken lightly by the Anglican Christian-owned reputable religious institution - Uganda Christian University (UCU). Uganda Christian University is a missionary project birthed by the Anglican church of Uganda. According to the national census conducted in 2024, the Anglican Christians were found to be 13.3 million (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024, p.29). Such a vibrant and growing population is a rich ground for Uganda Christian University to tap into and inspire clergy and Christians of working age to contribute to the pension scheme. The coordinational role of the university, then, is to ensure that people's savings are invested to attract admirable returns that can cater for their old age survival. Certainly, to navigate clergy-laity pension scheme, the study was guided by three objectives, thus, to: a) trace the historical development of the pension schemes in Uganda, b) ascertain the Anglican Church of Uganda social security systems, and c) examine the role, Uganda Christian University can play to enterprise manage Clergy-Laity pension scheme.

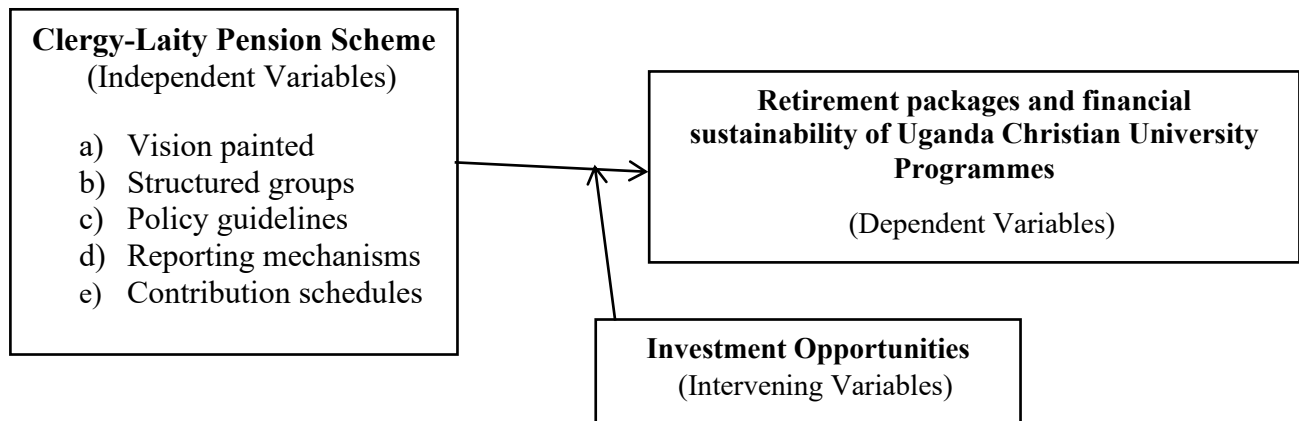
## **2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

In order to set the focus of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks were analysed as documented below:

**Theoretical framework:** The study was guided by the Social Capital Theory, coined by 'Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988), and Robert Putnam in 1995' (TheoryHub, 2025). The theory postulates that once a group's moral values and norms are spelt out, trust is cultivated among members, and voluntary social networks are well crafted, then monetary resources can be sustainably mobilised, invested, and proportionately distributed to aid healthier standards of living. According to the theorists, adherence to social capital building ethics results in strong relational bonds, democratic resolutions, profitable social networks, increased enrolments, and subscribers keep investing their resources with high expectations of reaping reasonable old age social security pension returns. However, the approach breeds exclusivism mentalities. People who do not meet the ethical demands of the group are not offered membership nor recruited to offer their

professional expertise. Such an anomaly leads to ethnic and interreligious discriminations (Wengo, 2023, p.158). Nonetheless, weaknesses withstanding, given the public reputation of Uganda Christian University (Senoga, 2024), if the institution is mandated by the Provincial Assembly – the supreme decision-making arm of the Anglican Church of Uganda (Siyasa, 2024) to take the lead in mobilising Anglican Christians to subscribe to the Cleary-Laity pension scheme, then praiseworthy results can be realised.

**Conceptual Framework:** Given the role that can be played Uganda Christian University, it can be conceptualised (Figure 1) that if ‘UCU Clergy-Laity Pension Scheme’ vision is well crafted and painted among Anglican Church of Uganda stakeholders, church structured groups are sensitized, policy guidelines are clearly explained, reporting mechanism that keep members informed on time on the growth of their savings are in place, and contributions schedules that remind members of their obligations are displayed; then, trust can be built and members can willingly contribute funds towards the scheme. The accumulated funds can be invested in business ventures to grow members’ savings. The accrued profits can then be apportioned to boost members’ retirement packages, and surplus used to cater for the development needs of the University.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### 3. Research Methodology and Ethical Considerations

Several research methodologies and ethical considerations were adhered to in the study. These were:

**Research Methodology:** Following haphazard sampling, the researcher: interacted with five leaders of indigenous informal savings groups (WallStreetMojo, 2024), got involved in participative observation in Church of Uganda Provincial Assembly (Salmons, 2023; Siyasa, 2024), and relied on literally historical analysis approach that focuses on ‘search for source material, external criticism, internal criticism, synthetic and analytical operations and composition’ (McGovern, 2022, p.9). The approaches were utilised to investigate the trends of social security pension schemes in Uganda, diving into the pivotal role that Uganda Christian University can play to influence Clergy and Laity in the Anglican church of Uganda to save funds for their old age life survival and how the missionary institution can utilize the accumulated savings to influence academic programmes expansion and financial sustainability.

**Ethical Considerations:** In order to avoid causing psychological harm to individuals who participated in the study: a) permission of the participants was sought, b) their responses have been kept confidential, and c) all the sources of secondary information have been referenced (Bhandari, 2024).

#### **4. Historical Development of Social Security Pension Schemes in Uganda**

Uganda has had social security systems in operation since ancient days. During the precolonial period, traditional social security mechanisms were the vibrant means through which the vulnerable groups of society were taken care of. The indigenous social security systems were not carpeted during the colonial period. Their social capital outputs are visible everywhere in Uganda. Ugandans are interconnected to social groups that provide emotional and monetary support during life transition celebrations and when life tragedies occur (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.35).

Just like elsewhere in the African society, the vulnerable groups of society - orphans, widows, elderly, and invalids are taken care of by their immediate family members and the lucky ones by family friends. Failure to identify and build social capital with the ancestral community, the pay back check is painful. Society isolates egocentric individuals when their misery days down. In certain circumstances, irresponsible individuals to communal responsiveness are roughed up (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.35). Of course, extending support to the venerable groups and yet there are chains of family obligations that demand attention is not an easy go. On the other hand, there are extended family members, though vulnerable, they exhibit beastly lifestyles. To such,

charitable family members, in most cases, abandon them to the disadvantage of their earthly abode extinction. Certainly, Ugandans invest their time and resources in community others in anticipation that their social capital payback cheque will be fatty.

Besides indigenous social capital investments, formal social service pension schemes were introduced in Uganda by the British government in 1921 to cater for European expatriates. In 1927, the pension scheme act was updated to benefit Asian migrant workers. Due to the emergence of European trained Africans, the pension scheme act was amended in 1929 to benefit professional indigenous employees. In 1935, the Armed Forces Pension Scheme was passed to cater for retired soldiers. As the economy expanded, so there was need for employees of different professional backgrounds, as such, Public Sector Pension Scheme act was adopted in 1946 to absorb public servants holding high profile jobs. After a time span of one year, the need to have workers in the private sector pensionable came up for debate and as a result, the National Social Security Fund Act was enacted in 1948 (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, pp.36-37).

The National Social Security Fund Act came in force to solve the challenges in the private labour market that needed the attention of the colonial government. Nonetheless, civil servants holding lower profile positions were left out and to the effect, the year 1950 witnessed the coming into force of legislations that allowed lower chain employees to voluntarily make contributions towards their old age retirement packages. But then, such arrangements were observed to be discriminative. To bridge the gap, the year, 1953 climaxed with the coming into force of pension fund act amendments that opened door for all civil servants to benefit from public service pension scheme (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.37).

As it can be observed, the evolving trends of social security pension schemes introduced in Uganda were parallel to those in Europe, however, social security homes for the elderly that are highly cherished and funded in Europe were not transplanted in Uganda (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.39). Probably colonial architects of social security services in Uganda, gave it a trail and realised it could not work. Supposedly, if homes for the elderly had been planted in Uganda, it is uncertain whether they would have taken root. Africans to detach themselves from the aged parents is a catastrophic disconnect from the mental domain of yet to be deceased ancestors.

After independence, Social Security Pension Schemes introduced by the colonial government were upheld by post-colonial governments. The schemes have undergone modifications. Several social security pension schemes are at play in Uganda and these include:

**Public Service Pension Scheme:** Established by the colonial government in 1946, the scheme is non-contributory by government employees. The scheme is financed by government revenue taxes. The scheme covers local government employees, employees in the judiciary, prison and police officers, and all government recruited teachers and medical workers. Benefits are paid when an employee attains a retirement age of 60 years or when an employee has served non-stop for at least 10 years. From the onset of retirement date, monthly support keeps on landing on the beneficiary's bank account and such continues for the next 15 years after the ex-government employee is officially declared dead. Any employee who withdraws from the government job before the legislated retirement period loses the indexed wage benefits. Under unfortunate circumstances, especially when death occurs, the next of kin is entitled to 100 percent of the deceased's pension benefits, after which, monthly support is accessed by the deceased's family for the next 15 years (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, pp.61-62).

Due to the challenges involved in timely payments from the consolidated fund to the beneficiaries, in the year 2023, a bill was tabled in parliament to revise the modalities of managing public service pension scheme. In the proposed bill, it is fronted that employees will contribute 5 percent from their monthly gross salary and government will top up 10 percent. The bill under scrutiny, proposes similar investment ventures and management yardsticks utilised by National Social Security Fund (NSSF). However, pension calculations and privileges remain constant as compared to middle age and one time lump sum hand-outs gifted to members by NSSF (Mundua, 2023).

**Armed Forces Pension Scheme:** Introduced in 1939 to cater for World War Two soldiers, the scheme provides benefits to the armed officers serving with Uganda People's Defence Forces. The scheme stipulates the guidelines to pay gratuities and other benefits in respect of death and disablement occurrences (Ngabirano, 2018, p.1). The formula used to compute pension benefits is similar that used in public service pension scheme (IOPS Countries Profiles, 2020, p.2).

**Parliamentary Pension Scheme:** The scheme was introduced in 2007. It covers Members of Parliament and people employed by the Parliament of Uganda. The scheme is contributory in nature. Each beneficiary contributes 15 percent of the gross salary and government tops up 30

percent on a monthly basis. The money is invested to accumulate profits that are distributed in relation to each individual's capital savings. At the exit of parliamentary business or attainment of age of 45 years subject to having been a member for five years; beneficiaries bag lump sum payments with accrued profits (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.62).

**National Social Security Fund:** The scheme was given more weight by the parliament of Uganda in 1985. The scheme that is employer-employee contributory in approach, covers individuals aged 16 to 55 years, working in the private sector. The employee contributes five percent of the gross monthly salary and the employer adds 10 percent. The accumulated savings are invested by the government regulated body. The realised interests are declared every year and beneficiaries keep monitoring the growth of their savings. Several benefits are dished out by the scheme. These include: Retirement age benefit – payable when a member attains age of 55 years; withdrawal benefit – paid when a member attains age 50 years and is out of regular cash inflows for a period of 12 months; disability benefits – paid when an individual is suffering from critical life robbing ill-health; deceased's benefits – paid to the next of kin in the event when a member dies; exempted benefits – payable to members who cross over to other government legislated pension schemes; and emigration benefit – paid to individuals who leave Uganda permanently (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.64-65).

In addition, the amended National Social Security Act – 2021, provides two non-compulsory midterm access to a member's accumulated funds. The first option benefits without disability impairments. Physically fit members are entitled to a sum not exceeding 20 percent of their accrued funds. In order for them to access midterm benefits, a member should be aged 45 years and should have contributed for a minimum period of 120 months. The second option is for members who in the due course of their contributions suffer from physical disabilities. Such members are entitled to a sum of 50 percent of their accumulated savings; on condition that a member is aged 40 years and has saved for a period of 120 months. However, attainment of age 55 years is the ring fenced condition for a member to access 100 percent lump sum take home benefits (The Republic of Uganda, 2022, p.12).

Hearteningly, the private sector scheme does not cover the population engaged in the informal sector, however, there is a provision that allows self-employed individuals to seek permission to be enrolled to make voluntary contributions. While it is mandatory and punitive for the employers



in the private sector to deduct and remit funds, it is not enforceable for the self-employed individuals in informal sector to remit their savings (The Republic of Uganda, 2022, pp.9-10).

**Non-Statutory Social Security Pension Schemes:** Uganda National Labour Force conducted a study in 2016/17 and established the workforce population to comprise of 15.3 million Ugandans. Out of the population that was in active employment, 16 percent were subscribing to social security pension saving schemes. In subsequent years, similar studies conducted in 2019 revealed that 80 percent of the work force in Uganda was in the informal sector. To the disappointment, all of them were not covered by any form of social security pension scheme (IOPS Countries Profiles, 2020, p.3).

Due to several challenges that were being manifested in the formal and informal employment sectors, parliament approved formation of Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA) in 2011. The role of URBRA is to: encourage establishments, promote the growth, monitor operations, and regulate management of social security pension schemes in Uganda (Bukuluki & Mubiru, 2014, p.66).

URBRA is playing a pivotal role in encouraging employers in the informal sector to formalise social security pension schemes for their employees. In the Ugandan informal employment sector, there are several voluntary social security schemes managed by individuals who agree to engage in merry-go-cycles to support each other in times of financial difficulties. Some groups have formalised their operations while many operate informally (Bukuluki & Mubiru, 2014, p.76). In the year ending 2022, 64 informal social security sector groups had been registered and many of them were engaged in commendable work (URBRA, 2022). For example:

The Mazima Voluntary Individual Retirement Benefits Scheme (MVIRBS) ... licensed by URBRA in 2016 ... has a flexible retirement savings contribution plan with no penalties for inconsistent contributions. All that is required for an individual to enrol ... is payment of a registration fee of UGX 10,000 (US\$2.70). The next requirement is to make a regular contribution of as little as UGX 2,000 (US\$0.50 cents) a day or UGX 10,000 (US\$2.70) per week - with no upper limit on contributions.

The recommended withdrawal age is 50, although the scheme permits early withdrawals after one year from the initial contribution...

The MVIRBS has also partnered with the biggest mobile telecommunications company, MTN Uganda; one of the largest microfinance institutions, Pride Microfinance; and one of the largest insurance companies, Britam, to distribute its pension plans and increase access to its products. To date, the MVIRBS has a total of 1,900 members, with cumulative savings amounting to

UGX 1.3 billion (US\$ 352,625). A total of Ushs 250 million (US\$ 67,812) has been paid to members (World Bank Group, 2019, pp.66-67).

MVIRBS is doing commendable work. The leadership management skills they are utilizing to recruit, retain, and keep members motivated to save for their future business projects are worth aping. Besides, registration of social security groups in the informal employment sector is a new trend in Uganda. Informal social capital building etiquettes have been the way of life and they are at the core of African society collective responsiveness. Nevertheless, having informal pension savings schemes registered is advantageous in that money invested is traded professionally and such ventures attract profits that in future when lump sums are pocketed, individuals are able to offset old age financial needs. Astonishingly, information displayed in the year 2022 showed that out of the 15.9 million Ugandan work force, only 18 percent were covered by law to be rewarded with old age benefits. To the majority Ugandans who are toiling and contributing revenues handsomely to the Ugandan economy, there are no clear systems that display investment plans for their old age savings and investments (URBRA, 2022).

Old age is associated with health complications and life basic necessities that need sufficient financial inflows. The number of Ugandans in old age bracket grows every year. In 1969, the number was 479,043. However, according to the national census conducted in 2014, results revealed that 1,433,305 elderly people were in Uganda (URBRA, 2020).

## **5. Anglican Church of Uganda Social Security**

The Anglican Church of Uganda is composed of 13.3 million followers from diverse ethnic (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2024, p.29). However, it is hard to crack literary sources to come to knowledge of the strategic endeavours that the leadership undertook since colonial days to ensure that members and the pastoral team at the transition time exit to old age life are gifted with sustainable social security pension fund envelopes. Certainly, in the African setting, the social network of friends and family members is vibrant, nonetheless, their financial support does not flow on a routine basis. In most instances, network of close relatives and friends respond scantily to solve one time life critical needs (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.35).

Articulating the need for old age social security pension support, the Archbishop, The Most Reverend, Doctor Stephen Samuel Kaziimba Mugalu, in his communiqué to the 27<sup>th</sup> Church of Uganda Provincial Assembly, held at Uganda Christian University, from Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024, he highlighted the evening life survival state of retired Bishops. He thus, made known:

I am glad to announce to you that we currently have 48 retired Bishops of Church of Uganda, generals that have an institutional memory and add value to our advisory teams. The number, as you can see keeps growing. It is a blessing at the same time an increasingly challenging situation because we do not prepare well for retirement as a church and as individuals. So how to cater for their varied needs becomes difficult for some Dioceses. I thank the 26<sup>th</sup> Provincial Assembly which approved to increase their retirement benefit from Uganda shillings 150,000 per month to Uganda shillings 250,000 per month. This was effected and I thank the Dioceses that are taking good care of these generals, helping them to cope with retirement challenges. We have the wives of the departed Bishops as well whom we must support and continue to minister to (Mugalu, 2024, p.6).

Archbishop's statement on the pension welfare state of retired Bishops was discussed by the Provisional Assembly. The various houses – Bishops, Clergy, and Laity that make up the assembly, during the plenary presentations, pointed out that mechanisms need to be put in place to step up the monthly stipends, not only for the retired Bishops but for all retired church workers. The Assembly bracketed Church workers as: Lay Readers, Priests, and Bishops.<sup>1</sup> However, there was an oversight; not all members who subscribe to the Anglican church of Uganda are covered by the social security pension schemes in Uganda. Certainly, if the shepherds are wrestled by old age survival financial challenges, what about the sheep?

Basically, the resolutions put forward by the Provincial Assembly were indicative that after church ministers retire from active service, then, officers continue to draw monthly stipends until death. Secondly, widows/widowers of deceased church workers ought to come on board to replace their spouses and continue earning till death brings their membership to closure (27<sup>th</sup> Church of Uganda Provincial Assembly Proceedings).

Nevertheless, arrangements painted by the Provisional Assembly to benefit the spouses of the deceased church ministers, though, pastorally healthy, they may be strenuous especially when the inflow of funds to service the pension earnings of the retired officers are opaque. This then means that there ought to be mechanisms whereby every person who subscribes to the Anglican church of Uganda, contributes to the retirement savings scheme. Certainly, post-retirement age earning for every church member till death may not be applicable but

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<sup>1</sup> **Source:** 27<sup>th</sup> Church of Uganda Provincial Assembly Proceedings, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024, at Uganda Christian University.

with well navigated strategies, it can be a profound endeavour to uphold African social responsibility that demands collective support for the vulnerable dependants of the deceased bread winner (Bukuluki and Mubiru, 2014, p.35).

In a nut shell, social security pension saving, though European tailored in Uganda, it is a lucrative undertaking that enables individuals to cultivate a spirit of saving to cater for future age financial needs. As such, several treaties to which Uganda is a signatory encourage political, religious, and cultural institutions to construct mechanisms that ensure that people are prepared to transit to old life joyfully (International Labour Organisation, 2023, p.2).

Astonishingly, a scan through Anglican Church of Uganda Canons and the Constitution, the lines constructed to shade light on social security pension packages for members are hard to figure out. And yet the Church Canons and the Constitution are extensions of European Anglicanism, handwork pioneer influenced by Bishop Alfred Robert Tucker's Ecclesiastical leadership in Uganda (Byaruhanga & Banja, 2013, pp.29-30).

The first Anglican Church of Uganda constitution was adopted in 1909 by an assembly, a mixture of Africans and Europeans, which comprised of 290 delegates – 40 Clergy and 250 Laity. The constitution laid a road map that made it easy for Christianity to take root in Uganda. In all social economic undertakings, the Anglican church of Uganda was 'ahead of the State in the direction of comprehensiveness; for there was yet nothing in the State corresponding to the African Synod' (Byaruhanga & Banja, 2013, pp.29-30). The question to ponder on then is: how come that social security pension undertakings for the Anglican Church of Uganda membership was not given due attention and yet the state took deliberate steps to legislate old age pension fund benefits for the energetic work force? Probably it was an oversight or the mandate was left to Africans to rethink their indigenous social capital engagements that mandate collective social responsibility to care for the vulnerable groups in society. In affirmation, Tucker's words pasted by Mattia (2007, p.47), he criticised the egocentric leadership outputs of European missionaries. He said:

I come now to the question of control. Naturally the European missionary thinks that he can do things much better than any Native. He therefore attempts to do everything himself. In this (in my opinion) he commits a grievous blunder, and unless turned from his purpose will mar the development of any Native Church with which he may have to do. The fact is, the Native can do many things much better than the European, and should be used from the very beginning. The missionary should do nothing that the Native can do.

As it can be observed in the ventilations put forward by Tucker, to him, it was the duty of the native Anglican Church of Uganda leadership to construct development systems that were to service the changing dynamic needs of the indigenous society. However, the construction process to be successful, African pastorate leadership needed to have been equipped with specialised skills. Certainly, the post-independence church leadership came up with several education programmes to equip indigenous people with pastoral and academic skills (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.3-10).

#### **6. Clergy-Laity Pension Scheme: Investment Opportunities for Uganda Christian University**

The year 1997 witnessed transition of Bishop Tucker Theological College, established in 1913, into the current Uganda Christian University. The Provincial Assembly of the Anglican Church of Uganda examined the changing trends of the time and resolved to front Christian integrated education to university students. Driven by the mandate ‘to equip students for productive, holistic lives of Christian faith and service,’ Uganda Christian University aspires to be ‘A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa’ (Byaruhanga & Banja, 2013, pp.136-137).

Uganda Christian University aspires to offer complete education for a complete person. The approach in practice equips students with: spiritual nurture skills to commune with the Christian Triune God, social skills to relate with society productively, physical health management skills to embrace preventive and curative measures to minimise illnesses, and economic life survival skills (Byaruhanga & Banja, 2013, pp.136-137).

In her endeavours to walk the dream, Uganda Christian University derives revenues from tuition fees paid by students. Other cash inflows come from university space rentals, external donor support, and tax exemptions by the government of Uganda. In order to increase the revenue base of the University, the Provincial Assembly held in the year 2017 approved a tributary source of income code named ‘Uganda Christian University Sunday (UCU Sunday).’ The last Sunday of September every year, was approved as a special day dedicated to encourage Christian’s all-over the country to support the activities of the university by way of prayer and offering financial support (Nyapendi, 2023). On that day, church ministers sacrifice customized church offertory hierarchical apportioned percentages that are meant to cater for their stipend. However, mechanisms to generate more resources from business companies and influential Ugandan tycoons on that special day seem to be undergoing laboratory tests.

Marvellously, money generated during past UCU-Sundays has done tremendous work to cater for: university infrastructural development, theological education of clergy, and tuition support for clergy's children accessing education at the academic institution (Nyapendi, 2023). Nevertheless, there are questions that need attention, thus: a) how are the beneficiaries being prepared to give back to the scheme after graduation? b) How will in the long run, clergy's children, who study from other tertiary academic institutions benefit? c) Is there a future possibility of financially struggling young people from other religious denominations to benefit from the scheme?

Certainly, if vaccines to the groaning voices are not hatched, then, the missionary engagement of Uganda Christian University with Anglican Christian community and interfaith religious neighbours is most likely to be questioned by indigenous Christian donors, disgruntled clergy, and religious pluralists. Of course, given the ever-changing development demands of an academic institution, it is practically impossible to solve all educational critical needs of members whose finger prints make the university to wheel forward. Nonetheless, having a balanced policy in place that defines the benefits of all Clergy and Laity, and how gestures of compassionate love can be extended to other religious denominations, is most likely to inspire members to keep offering prayers and financial resources to support the growth of the academic institution.

Humanly, to be motivated to subscribe to the dream of a big institution and to remain a life member, it means that I inject in my resources in anticipation that at a certain time in future, I shall receive a payback life survival kit. Intrinsically, constructive relationship rubs are two way balanced benefits, without which, the balloon at the extreme end of the sea saw becomes airless.

Above all, gaps withstanding, UCU Sunday programme has penetrated the Anglican Christian community in Uganda. The infancy resource mobilization and management outputs are clear cuts that amplify that the team is well organised professionally to move the academic institution to great heights (Nyapendi, 2023). Therefore, in order to bridge the gaps, there is need for Uganda Christian University to work out a methodology of having Church of Uganda Anglican Christians deriving incomes from the formal, private, and informal employment sectors get involved in the progressive growth of the University.

Clergy and Laity need to be brought on board by way of establishing '**UCU Clergy-Laity Social Security Pension Scheme.**' Once the scheme is in place, members in the informal employment

sector who occupy a big space will have been given opportunity to save for their old age. On the other hand, it will be an added advantage for Christians in formal and private employment sectors to have multiple old age retirement savings and investments. The task of the academic institution will then be to have member's accumulated savings invested on their behalf and accumulated profits annually apportioned to grow member's savings, to cater for partial tuition fees of needy students, and to solve other university growth strategic needs as they unfold.

Definitely, if Social Security Pension Scheme is ventured into by Uganda Christian University, then there will be need to reshape the mission statement to capture the involvement of the wider community. This will be advantageous in that church of Uganda Anglican Christians will own the missionary academic institution at heart. Viewed from the missionary perspective, the leadership role of the university in society goes beyond mentoring students. There are several opportunities within reach, if tapped into, then the institution can work steadily towards realising her dream – A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa. Some of the opportunities include:

**Sub Parish Church Savings and Credit Schemes:** Among Anglican Christian communities, there exist informal credit and savings schemes. A scholarly report published by Ndahiro and Lushwata (2023) revealed that informal money borrowing by adult population to boast their small businesses, to meet medical bills, and to pay school fees; stood at 77 percent in Uganda as compared to those who borrowed money from established micro finance institutions.

Informal savings groups observable on ground among the indigenous communities range from 10 to 30 members. To be a member of the group, one is supposed to be a long-time resident of the locality and a person of sound reputation. Savings groups have well organised leaderships that consist of the chairperson, secretary, treasury, and a loan recovery task force. No one is discriminated upon to join a savings group on ground of religious affiliation or ethnicity.

The group defines the minimum financial amounts to be saved on a weekly basis and such monies are traded immediately among members to boast their financial needs. Minimum weekly saving per member is Uganda shillings 2,000 which is equivalent to USD 0.54 but the maximum amount for a member to save is open. Interests on borrowed money are extracted on a monthly basis.

Monthly interest rates are agreed upon not by signing legal documents but by general consensuses. It is a must for every member to borrow money. This is so because one of the rules of the group is that funds must be traded to accumulate profits. A member who borrows more times and pays back promptly attracts bonus benefits as compared to the one who trades less in the group's accumulated savings.

Anyone who does not subscribe to the group from the beginning of savings and credit cycle is not allowed to borrow money. All group members are guarantors to the borrowers. No collateral is needed. No minutes are recorded. Finance meetings are informal. Borrowers sign for the money against their names recorded in a counter book and their records are updated upon repayment of the loan with the accrued interests. Finance record books and balances of money at hand are kept in a metallic box by the treasurer but the keys to the box are kept by the chairperson of the group.

Savings and credits stop in the month of October. November is for ensuring that all borrowed money is assembled in the treasury. Those who fail to repay the loan within the month of November, they are followed up by the loan recovery task force accompanied by the local village chairperson. In the presence of the local government chairperson, disputes are resolved amicably. The defaulter hands over a viable family property for sale to recover the loan. Dishonest individuals are then smoked out of the group. December is the month for closure of accounts, for members to receive their accumulated savings and profits, to enrol new members, and to allow others to withdraw. The cycle of informal savings and credits goes on, spinning from January to December every year.

Even when there are reports on ground of thieves breaking into the houses of treasurers to steal the metallic box containing member's accumulated funds, informal savings and credit schemes have never vanished out of the African indigenous communities. Informal savings and credit groups are friendly and accessible means of microfinance transactions by grass root people. Studies reveal that there are thousands of grassroots savings and credit self-help groups in Uganda (Nakayi, Twesiime-Kirya & Kwagala, 2005, p.286). Informal savings groups then, are opportunities for Uganda Christian University to ride on to plant seeds of Clergy-Laity Social Security Pension Scheme.



Undoubtedly, If Uganda Christian University gets on board and takes on the missionary endeavour of: providing finance literacy lessons to the local Christian congregation savings and credit groups, digitalise savings and credit schemes to make them visible, publish the informal savings and credits group's success stories on annual basis, and ritualise the beginnings of savings and credit business cycle to offer priestly blessings; then well-energized informal savings and credit groups would become stepping stones for the University leadership to sink her visibility roots among Christians.

During the initial engagement approaches, Uganda Christian University leadership needs to approach informal savings and credit group members as a team seeking to learn and not as experts, after all, indigenous savings and credit groups have never raised an alarm that they need experts to support them. Their community microfinance transactions obligations are driven by their African cultural spirit of collective responsibility and not by Europeanised intellectual standards. However, by providing group members with UCU branded account books and digital management tools in alignment with their financial capture routines, is a vital entry point.

Certainly, the navigation stage has cost implications in terms of rolling out finance literacy trainings and annual publication of informal savings and credits performances. Nonetheless, given the fact that UCU-Sunday has taken a seat among Christians, then, a portion of annual collections can be sliced and allocated to kick-start the noble cause of walking towards establishment of Clergy-Laity Social Security Pension Scheme.

During the navigation stage, before seeds of Social Security Pension Scheme are introduced to the indigenous Anglican Christian communities, there is need for the scheme implementation to flow from top pastoral leadership to the bottom, that is, from the House of Bishops, then Diocesan Clergy, and finally to the Archdeaconry Lay Leaders. Once the pastoral leadership is thoroughly empowered, everyone is satisfied that their savings are safe, and they are happy with monthly updates wired on their phones; then the scheme can be rolled out to Christians.

But then, the time span to build confidence among the pastoral leadership need to be well calculated, so as not to rush through the process but not to drag so much. God's business economy is plentiful but harvesters are very few (Mathew 9:35-38), so the need for the priesthood house to call on God to raise professionals housed at Uganda Christian University to engage with the Anglican Christian community.

Once the Pastoral leadership is well organised, UCU Clergy-Laity Social Security Pension Scheme policy guidelines are in place, and the pastoral team is 100 percent covered; then the scheme can be rolled to the Christian congregations. At the time of roll out, old age pension saving will not be a new concept to the Christian congregations. It will be an innovation to the already ongoing informal savings and credits schemes energized by Uganda Christian University through finance literacy trainings and annual celebrations. In addition, the well-equipped pastoral leadership team will speak positively about the scheme and their pastoral voices are most likely to influence many Christians to enrol in the scheme.

**Real Estates:** Armed with Clergy-Laity Social Security Pension savings, Uganda Christian University can engage in real estate business. Anglican church of Uganda worship spaces are seated on big chunks of land. Much of the land is located in urban centres. There is growing need for rental space in urban areas and the numbers of young people accessing primary, secondary and university education is in urgent need of hostels. Real estate investments with zero land cost purchase is an avenue that if accumulated pension funds are professionally invested, Christians can fetch substantial profits from their savings (Ssebwami, 2024).

**Creation Care:** Creation care is another venture that Uganda Christian University can engage in to invest pension savings. Afforestation and reforestation may not only be promoted to protect the environment but it can be an opportunity to harvest wood and medicine. The demand for timber by the construction industry and manufacturing plants is on the increase. In addition, wood fuel is highly consumed. Studies conducted in 2016, indicated that 94 percent of Ugandan population consumed wood fuel as the major source for cooking (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.8-10). Certainly, commercial tree farming on church land, is a viable venture that if well invested, can boast the pension fund base of Christians.

Besides real estate and creation care businesses, there are multiple investment ventures that the accumulated pension savings can be traded in to generate profits, but it all depends on well-constructed policies that display how profits are distributed to the satisfaction of pension scheme subscribers and what portion is retained to run Uganda Christian University development programmes.

As a matter of fact, Uganda Christian University taking on Clergy-laity pension scheme management will be advantageous in many ways: a) the clergy team and the local Christian congregations will own the university at heart, b) overdependence on external funders to finance university programmes will reduce, c) Christians subscribing to the pension scheme will greatly benefit from subsidized university programmes, d) the vision of Church of Uganda – ‘A Faster Growing Sustainable Christ-Centered Church,’ will be tangible (Ntagali & Magezi, 2016, pp.1-10), and e) the academic institution will be at the cutting edge dream walk – ‘A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa.’

## 7.0 Conclusion

Formal and informal social security pension schemes are old age survival capital accumulation plants. In Uganda, few people benefit from formal employment sector pension fund arrangements. Even when recent Ugandan legislations have opened doors for the organised social groups in the informal sector to engage in social security pension investments, there are no clear legislated enforcement systems that hold individuals accountable to save and invest for their old age. Similarly, within the missionary mandate of the Anglican church of Uganda that has a well organised hierarchal leadership structures, there are no systems in place to support clergy and Christians to invest for their old age. Many clergy retire from active service and lead miserable lives. It is, thus recommended that if Uganda Christian University, a missionary project of the Anglican church of Uganda, takes the lead in championing Clergy-Laity social Security Pension Scheme, then the investment outcomes will greatly solve old age financial needs of clergy, laity, and at the same time, contribute to the academic institution programmes expansion and financial sustainability.

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