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**The Quest for Efficiency: Role of Human Resource Management in
Public Sector Reforms in Uganda**

**A Thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements
For the Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies
At Massey University, Palmerston North
New Zealand**

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2002

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ABSTRACT

The context of this thesis is the development strategy of public sector reforms and privatisation. It uses Uganda as a case study, and argues for the need to integrate the issue of human resource management in the privatisation discourse in developing countries. Public sector reforms arose out of neo-liberal thinking that argues against state intervention and recommends market led economic growth. Privatisation is part of the attempt to scale back on the role of the state in economic development and has been integrated in the development policies of developing countries through the structural adjustment programs of the IMF and World Bank. It is required because of the belief that the private sector is more efficient in allocation and use of resources and is therefore the best medium for attaining development goals. Private sector companies in the developed countries which utilise modern techniques of management are comparatively more efficient than their public counterparts. Globalisation and market competition forced organisations to search for ways to be competitive and this partly led to organisations elevating human resource management issues to a strategic level because of the belief that a company's workers add value that make firms competitive.

When privatisation is made a requirement by the multilateral aid agencies for developing countries it is based on the assumption that the conditions that make public enterprises inefficient do not exist in the private sector. No empirical evidence is available to confirm or refute these assumptions, particularly in the case of Africa's developing nations. This thesis has contributed to this area by examining the human resource management practices of seven Ugandan organisations, three public, two private and two privatised. The aim was to find out whether there are differences in the way in which private and public organisations manage their employees and if their practices are those associated with effective management of human resources. The practices that were examined were recruitment and selection of staff, training, compensation and employee attitudes. The results from this study did not provide evidence that the differences that were exhibited in the seven organisations were related to ownership. Rather they seem to be determined by the values and culture of managers and the labour market conditions in Uganda. Both private and public enterprises exhibited practices that human resource management literature and practice consider as obstacles to efficiency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis has been made possible by the support and encouragement of many people and I wish to acknowledge their contribution.

First I wish to thank the New Zealand ODA whose financial support made it possible for me to commence and complete the study. I also wish to thank the managers of the seven organisations in which I conducted the study, for their willingness to give me access to their premises and their employees. Thank you too to the employees who participated in the study for sparing the time to talk to me and to complete the questionnaires. I also wish to thank the Economic Policy Research Centre and Uganda Co-operative Alliance for providing access to their facilities during the time I was in the field.

I also wish to thank my chief supervisor Dr. Barbara Nowak for her untiring efforts and understanding as she walked me through the various stages of thesis preparation. She had the unenviable task of having to read through my disorganised drafts and did a great job. Thank you for the motivation and guidance and being there whenever I needed you. It gave me the courage to go on. My heartfelt thanks also go to my second supervisor Prof. John Overton whose guidance and comments helped me to understand the nature of public sector reforms. Thanks too for taking up the role of main supervisor when Barbara was away and being available. I am also very grateful to my third supervisor Prof. Alan Williams for his patience and assistance at various stages of my study. Thank you for giving me the insight I needed in the area of human resource management. The combined efforts of the three of you have been of great assistance in keeping me focused and getting to this point.

I wish to thank my friends (too many to mention but you know who you are!) here in New Zealand and overseas whose friendship and support made it possible for me to keep going. The moral support always gave me the impetus to face the thesis with renewed hope. A very big thank you to my family who had to put up with my letters, e-mails and phone calls making demands on your time. Your love, patience, encouragement and belief in me kept me going during the tough times.

Above all, I wish to thank my God and Lord Jesus Christ for my life and for making it meaningful at all times.

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