

**THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL  
AFFAIRS ON THE LEARNERS' PROJECT UNDER THE NATIONAL  
IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NIRA)**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT,  
PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA,  
KAMPALA.**

**MARCH, 2018**

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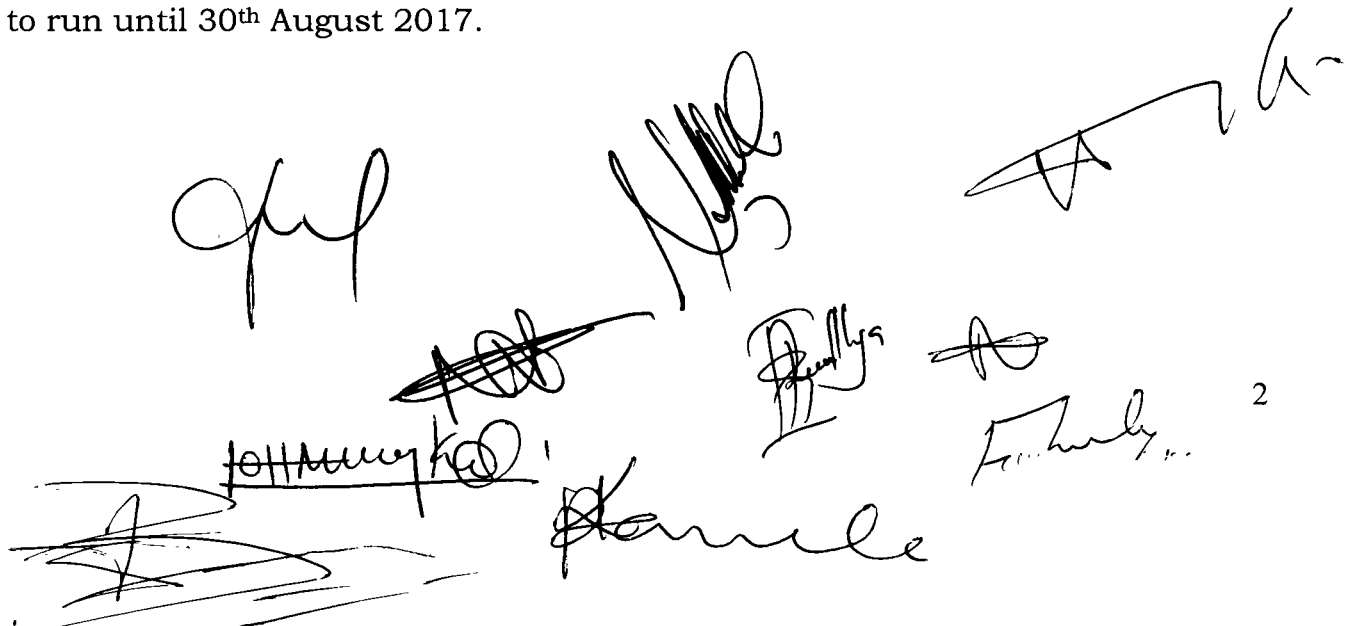
## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs conducted an oversight visit in the districts of Kampala and Wakiso, to appraise the status of the Learners' Project under the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) in accordance with Rule 185 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, and Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda; which empowers Committee to monitor the performance of the Ministries and Agencies under its supervision.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

The National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) was established by the Registration of Persons Act 2015. Its principle mandate and responsibility is to create, manage, maintain and operationalize the National Identification Register. NIRA is expected to achieve this mandate by among others; registering all citizens of Uganda, registering non-citizens; who are lawful residents in Uganda, assigning a National Identification Number for all registered persons and assigning National Identification Cards and Alien Identification Cards to all registered persons, including Refugees.

In pursuit of the above-mentioned mandate, in a retreat of Government Ministers and Permanent Secretaries at Kyankwanzi between 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017, Government passed a resolution to operationalize the idea of the "Learners' Project" (herein after referred to as "the Project"). The Project's aim was to register all learners in the country aged between five (5) and sixteen (16). There was a set target of registering 10 (ten million) learners in primary schools, secondary schools and post-primary technical institutions across the country. The Project officially commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and was expected to run until 30<sup>th</sup> August 2017.



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- A signature below the right one, possibly reading "F...".

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

During the field visit, the Committee interacted with staff members of the different schools, Guardians/Parents and the Enrolment Officers. The schools sampled included both private and government aided schools. These are;

- i) Noor Secondary School - Queens Way, Katwe
- ii) Kings Day Care and Boarding Primary School, Kabowa
- iii) St. Andrew's Primary School, Ndejje
- iv) St. Kizito Primary School, and
- v) St. Kizito Senior Secondary School, Bugolobi

The Committee also invited and interacted with the Minister for Internal Affairs and NIRA technocrats in a meeting at Parliament.

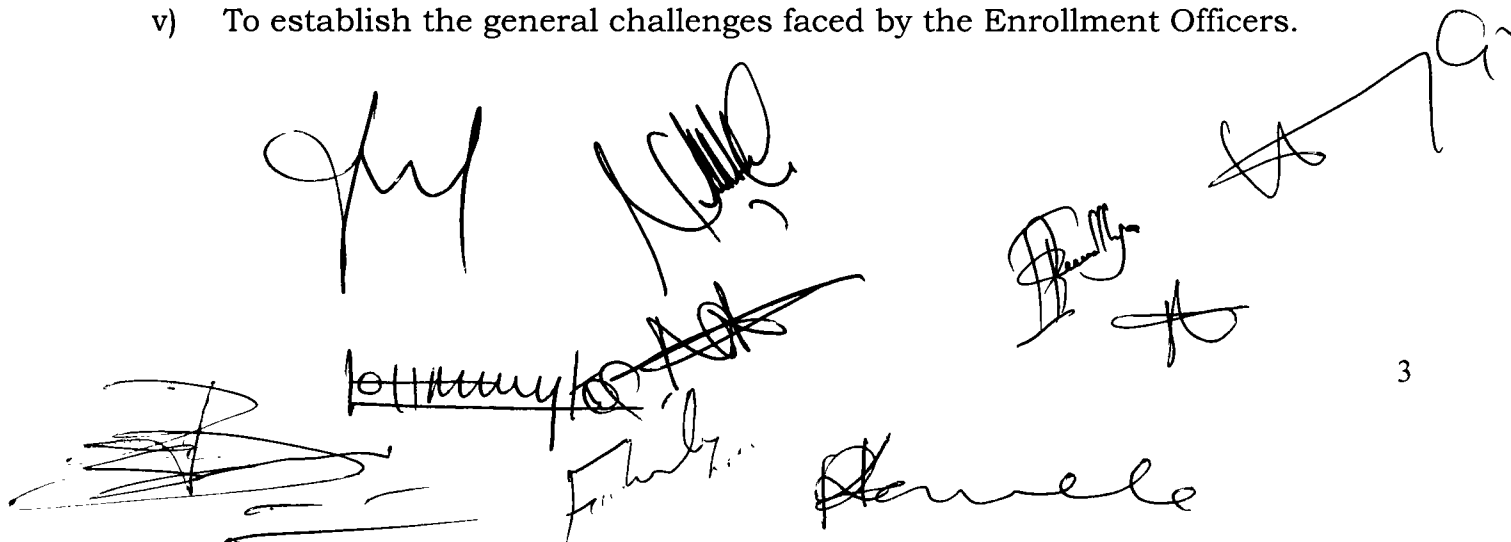
The Committee was also guided by the following documents;-

- The Registration of Persons Act 2015,
- The National Budget 2016/2017
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs Ministerial Policy Statement for Financial Year 2017/2018

### 4.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee was guided by the following terms of reference;

- i) To ascertain the financial performance of the project,
- ii) To ascertain the level of stakeholder's awareness.
- iii) To ascertain the logistical and equipment related challenges faced by the project,
- iv) To ascertain the purpose of the frequent supplementary budget requests,
- v) To establish the general challenges faced by the Enrollment Officers.

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## 5.0 FINDINGS

The Committee interacted with NIRA technocrats, heads of beneficiary schools at registration points, Parents/Guardians and the Enrolment Officers and concluded that the Project was faced with challenges. These challenges range from equipment issues, disgruntlement among workers, lack of sensitization/awareness among parents/guardians and other major stakeholders as to the purpose of the project, and a considerable disparity between the approved budget and the overall performance of the project.

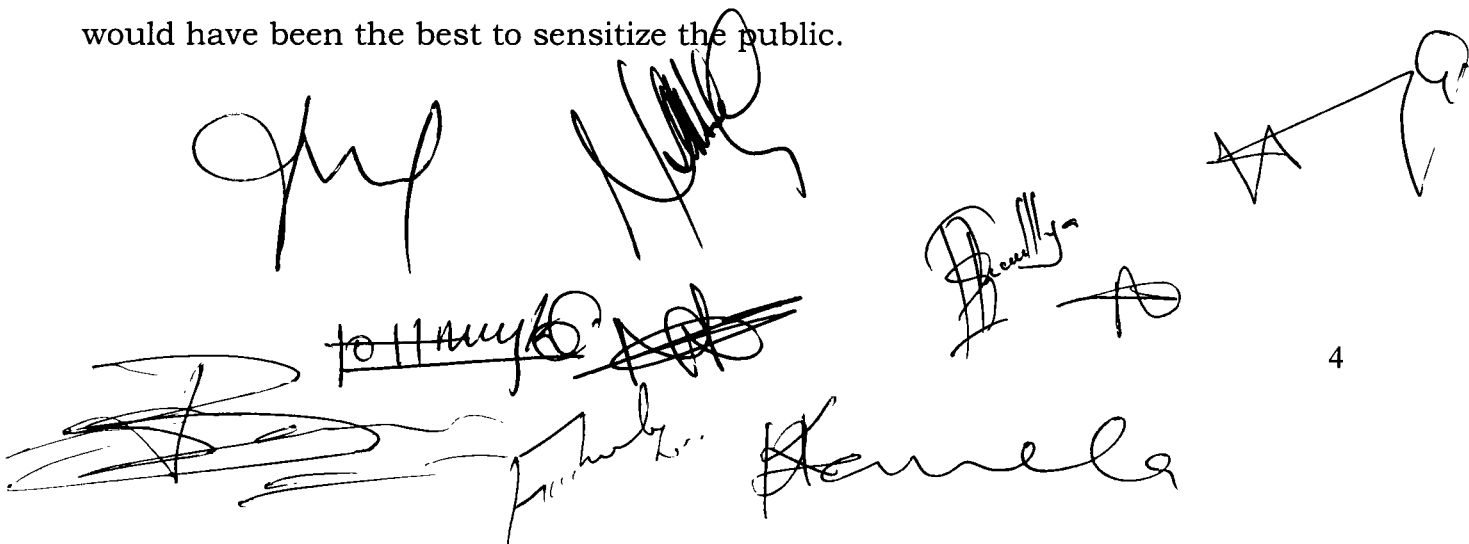
### 5.1. Financial Performance:

The initial budget for the registration of learners Project was UGX.53.6Bn and it was planned to be released in 2 (two) installments in FY 2016/17 and 2017/18. During the FY 2017/18, Shs.69.5Bn was spent out of the approved budget of Shs.53.6Bn reflecting performance of 130%. The over performance was due supplementary funding of Shs.15.6Bn which was approved for the project.

### 5.2 Poor Stakeholder Awareness and Publicity of the Project:

Whereas Parliament approved a budget of Shs.468 million for publicity and media relations, NIRA reduced it to Shs.192 million and the balance was irregularly re-allocated to other activities without Parliamentary approval. Due to low public awareness, some parents/guardians turned up with incomplete records and requirements for the registration of their children, which delayed the registration process.

The Committee further noted that poor stakeholder awareness was brought about by NIRA's failure to involve the local leaders, like LCIII Chairpersons and the District Education Officers. Being on ground, such categories of people would have been the best to sensitize the public.



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**Recommendation:**

**The Committee recommends that in future, NIRA should desist from irregularly reducing and re-allocating funds without Parliament's approval. Reducing of the publicity and media relations budget far compromised the sensitization/awareness purpose which was a vital component in the registration of Learners Project. Such funds would have been used to facilitate the local leaders, like the LCIII Chairpersons and the District Education Officers.**

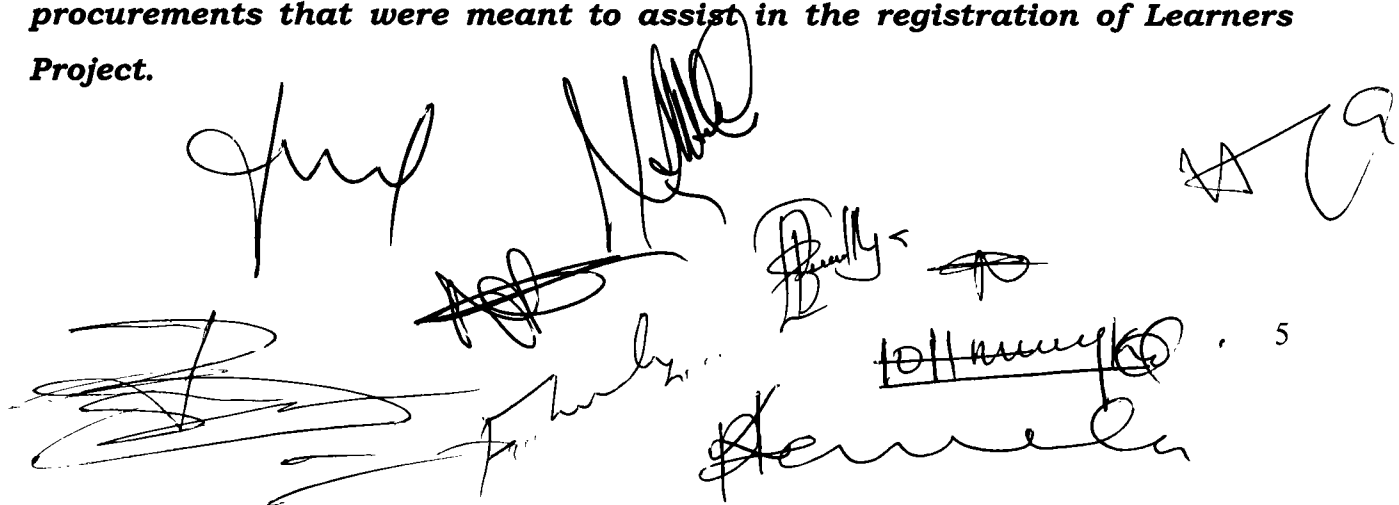
**5.3 Use of old and outdated registration equipment**

The Committee noted that the Project equipment used was old, which negatively affected the smooth implementation of the registration exercise. Cameras, laptops and other accessories including batteries were outdated, yet Parliament had approved a budget for the procurement of new equipment and other accessories during the budget for financial year, 2016/17. The equipment that was used in the Learner's Project is the same equipment that was used during the registration of 2014.

The Committee further established that, whereas 2,000 (two thousand) laptops and batteries were procured for the exercise at the cost of Shs.7.98Bn; delivery was only made at the end of the Project hence, the expenditure did not meet the needs of the Project.

**Recommendation:**

**The Committee recommends that a serious investigation should be instituted on NIRA Management regarding all procurements. This should include the procurement of generators, lap-tops, batteries; and all other procurements that were meant to assist in the registration of Learners Project.**



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**Recommendation:**

***The Committee further recommends that the Auditor General should conduct a Forensic Audit on the registration of Learners Project and if any discrepancies are found; the culprits should be interdicted.***

**5.4 Supplementary funding for the project:**

The Committee established that since the inception of the project, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has since granted supplementary funding amounting to Shs.15.6Bn to NIRA. During financial year 2016/17, Shs.5.7Bn was granted and in financial 2017/18 Shs.9.9Bn has been granted. This was by technical re-allocation which is not supported by the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.

The Committee's further inquiry revealed that the steering committee approved a supplementary budget of UGX.2.8Bn towards the closure of FY 2016/17 which is a sign of last minute expenditure. This supplementary was granted, yet the original budget had not yet been exhausted which is rather questionable.

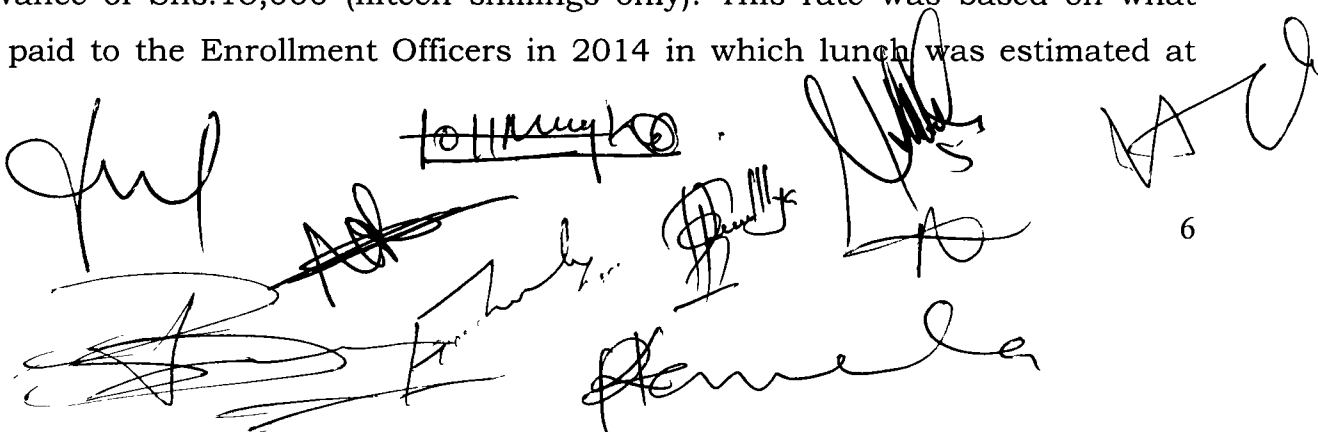
**Recommendation:**

***The Committee recommends that Parliament should first undertake a critical study of such requests, and; unless there is clear evidence of the exhausted funds, supplementary requests should not be approved to avoid abuse of funds.***

**6.0 CHALLENGES FACED BY THE ENROLLMENT OFFICERS:**

**6.1 a) Inadequate Facilitation for the Enrollment Officers:**

The Committee established that the Enrolment Officers were paid a daily allowance of Shs.15,000 (fifteen shillings only). This rate was based on what was paid to the Enrollment Officers in 2014 in which lunch was estimated at



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UGX 3,000 per day. However, this assumption was unrealistic cognizant of the current cost of living and mindful of the fact that poor facilitation risked safety of government information and equipment in the hands of ill- facilitated project officers.

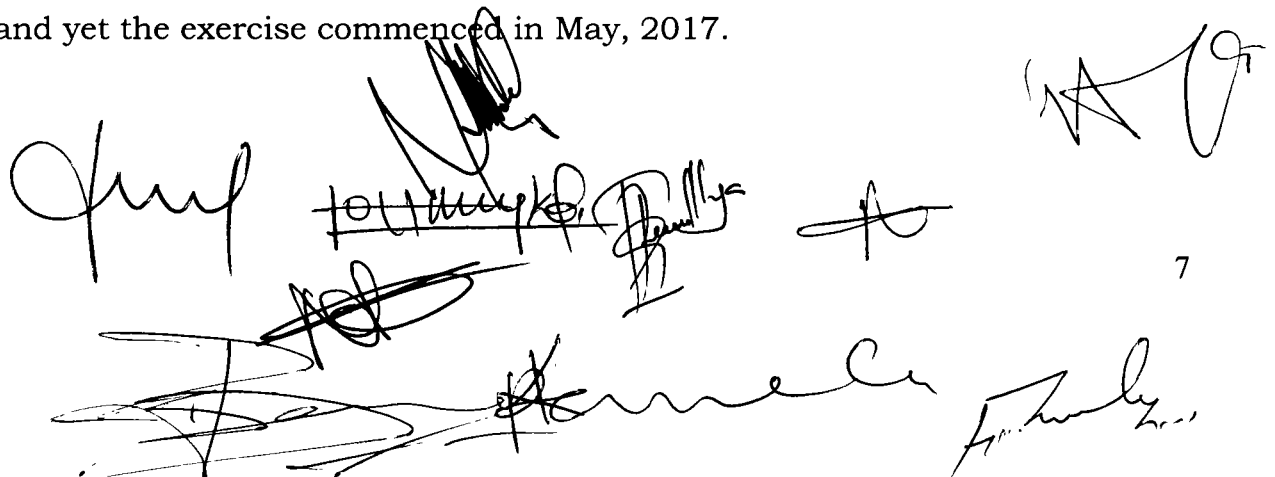
The Committee further established that the exercise was conducted daily; that is, from Sunday to Sunday and yet their letters of appointment only assigned UGX. 450,000 (Four hundred and fifty thousand shillings) per month for their allowances; without any additional facilitation. This led to a go-slow approach to their work because the money was too little, compared to the tasks assigned. This arrangement kept the Enrollment Officers frustrated and disgruntled, leading to a general failure to beat the deadline.

The Committee was also informed that some officers borrowed to implement project activities and endured the pain in anticipation that they would be considered for appointment in the massive recruitment to fill NIRA vacancies. This however did not materialize as the recruitment exercise attracted other applicants and not the Enrollment Officers who had been hired during the Learners' Project.

**b) Absence of Attendance Registers:**

During the inspection, the Committee further established that there were no daily attendance registers for Enrolment Officers at all registration centers and lack of supervision. This casted doubt on the basis, accuracy and reliability of the daily allowance computation.

Even then, the Enrollment Officers the Committee interacted with reported delays in payment of their allowances; for example, at the time of the visit in July, 2017 some payments had not been effected, others reported receiving half pay and yet the exercise commenced in May, 2017.



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The Committee learnt that payment was made according to the days worked yet no attendance registers were found at the registration centers. To make matters worse, the allowances were paid selectively to some individuals but not to all Enrollment Officers. The Committee did not ascertain the criteria NIRA used to pay these allowances and why some of the workers were not paid at all.

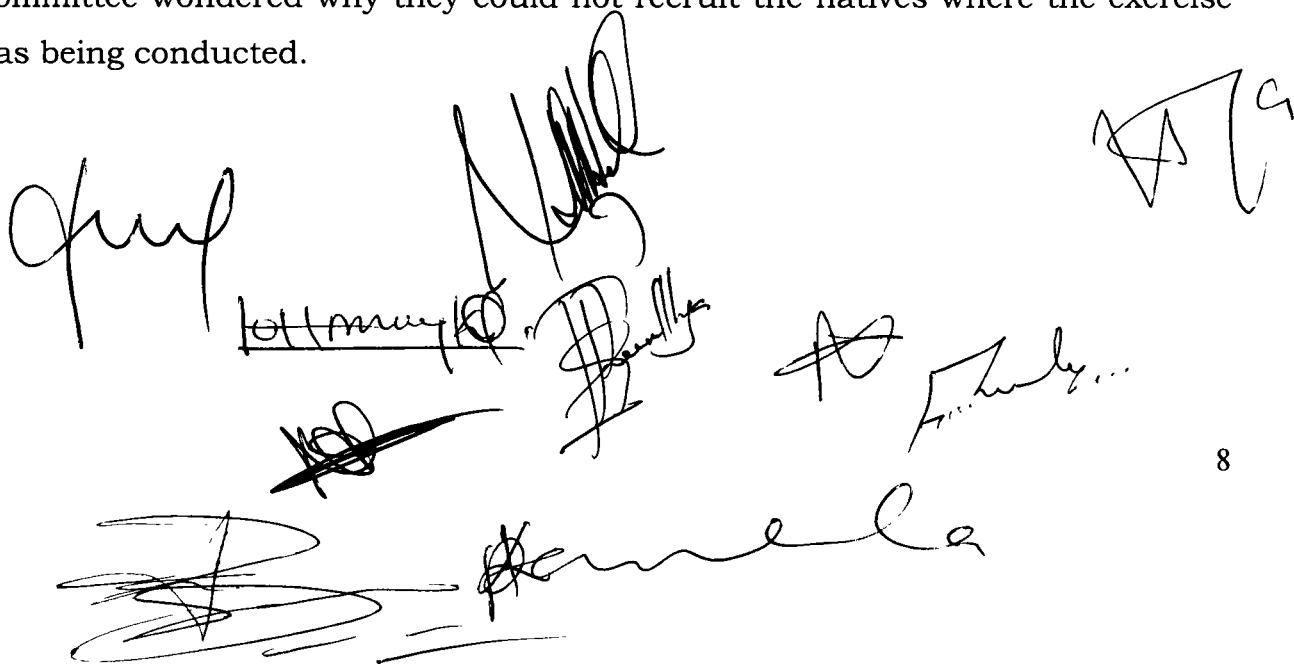
**c) Payment of allowance through Mobile Money Platforms:**

The Committee also noted the unnecessary change in the payment method of the Enrolment Officers' allowances. Upon receipt of the appointment letters, the Enrollment Officers were asked to submit their account numbers through which their allowances would be channeled. However, NIRA opted to effect their payment through Mobile Money Platforms. This new payment method did not factor in withdrawal charges which is a considerable sum relative to the meagre allowance being paid to the Project staff.

**d) Withdrawal of Original Appointment Letters:**

The Committee also leant that NIRA withdrew the original appointment letters from the Enrollment Officers and were told to keep photocopies only. As such, they were left working without formal contracts and terms and conditions of service; a factor that the Committee noted could have also contributed to the disgruntlement among workers.

The Committee further noted that some of the Enrollment Officers were recruited from long distances, outside Kampala; which was so costly on their part because it involved feeding and accommodating themselves. The Committee wondered why they could not recruit the natives where the exercise was being conducted.



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**Recommendations:**

**The Committee recommends that all current project staff should be offered new contracts reflecting their terms and conditions of engagement.**

**The Committee further recommends that a revision of the current allowance structure of the Enrollment Officers should reflect the current economic environment and cost of living in the country.**

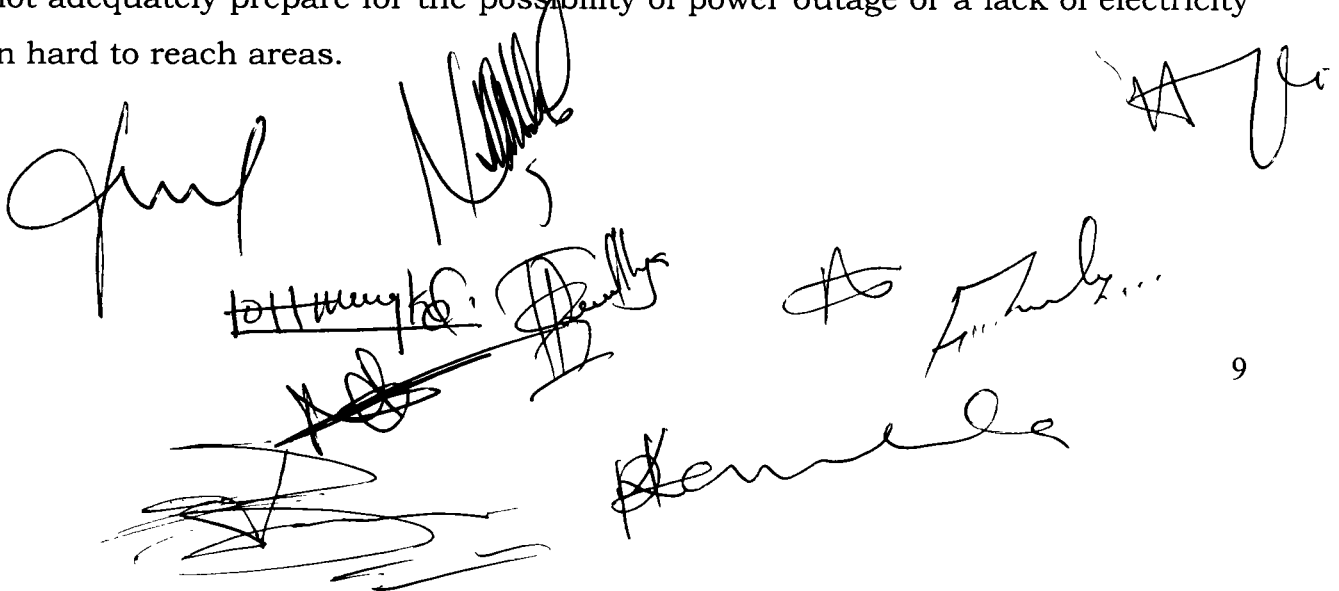
**6.2 a) Equipment-related challenges**

The Committee discovered that there were no arrangements for storage of NIRA equipment in schools; their safe custody depended on the good will of the head teachers. Whereas it would have been appropriate for the head teachers to provide safe places to keep the equipment, in some schools it was not the case. As a result, the equipment would be left exposed to harsh weather conditions and that affected their performance.

There were incidences of cameras getting lost since most of them were not engraved. Lack of a clear marking and engraving system to indicate which equipment belonged to NIRA and which was personal made the equipment very susceptible to theft.

**b) Electricity outages and blackouts:**

The Committee noted that in case of power outage, there was no provision for power storage; not even provision to cater for charging batteries. Information would get lost from machines that were lacking power save options. NIRA did not adequately prepare for the possibility of power outage or a lack of electricity in hard to reach areas.



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The Committee noted that issues like provision for power outages and storage for the equipment should have been ironed out in June 2017, when the Project was rolled out. This was the first stage when registration forms, equipment and other materials were distributed.

Some Enrollment Officers were left with no option but to carry the equipment to their homes which was very risky. Unfortunately, NIRA did not put this into consideration despite the considerable budget Parliament had approved for the Learners Project. In the long run, it had an effect on the smooth implementation of the Project.

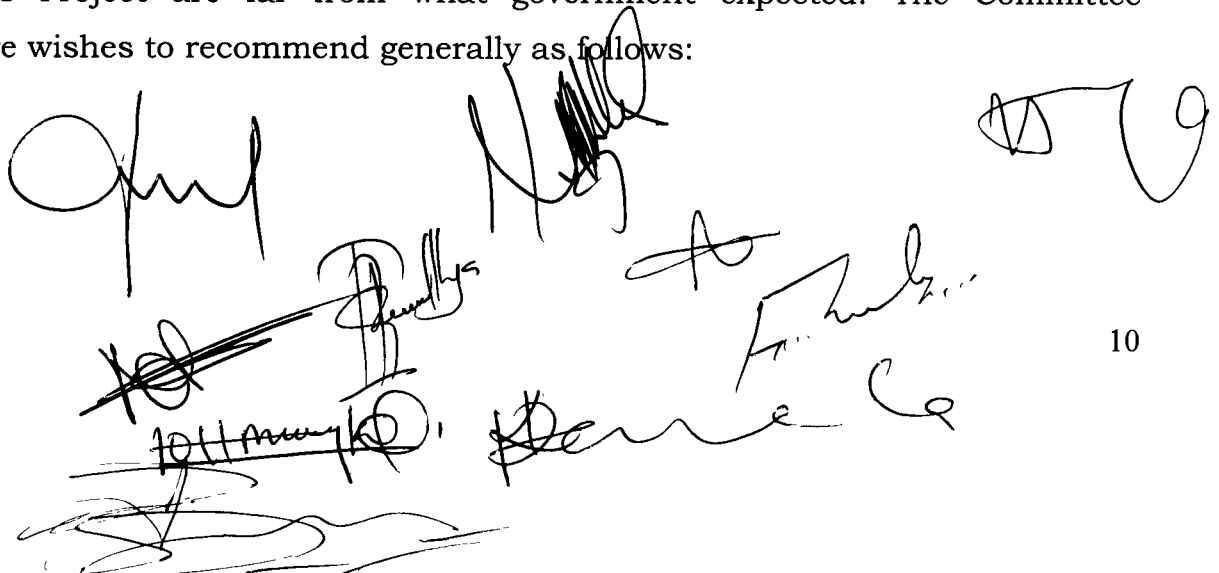
**Recommendation:**

***The Committee recommends that the entire exercise of registering learners should be redesigned and repeated because the work was shoddy. The Ministry of Internal Affairs should take an upper hand by regularly monitoring and evaluating such an important project and should report to Parliament quarterly.***

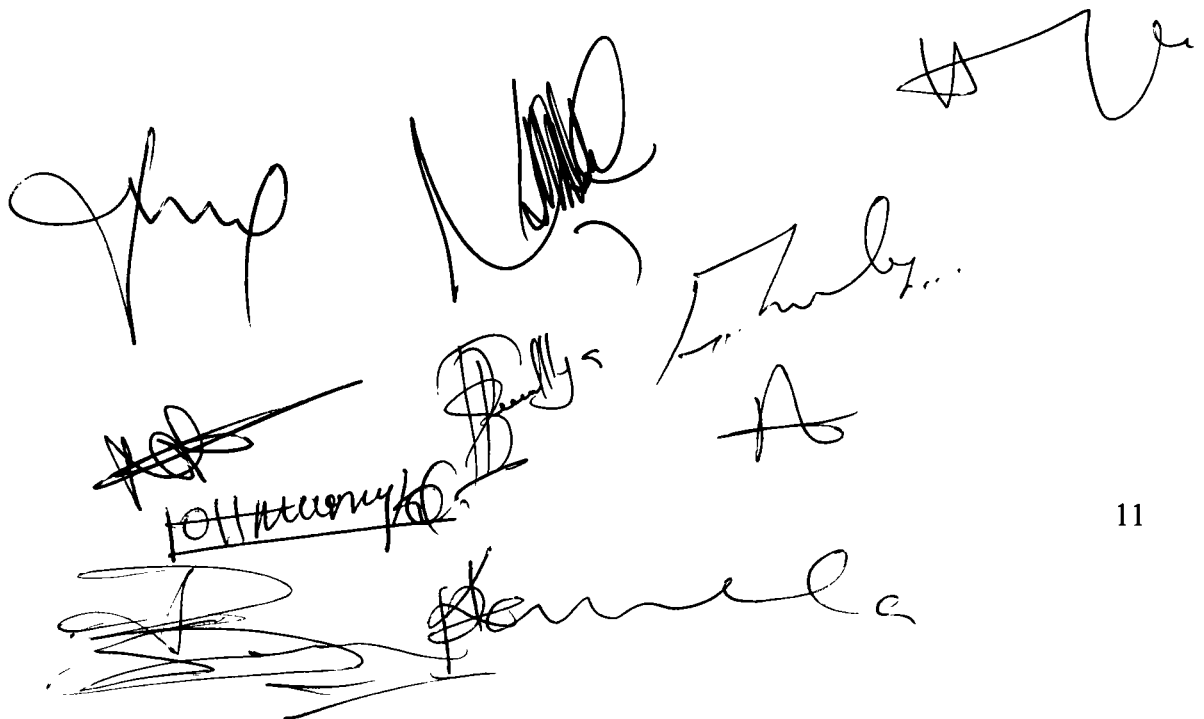
***The Committee further recommends that NIRA should involve the local leaders; especially the LCIII Chairpersons and the District Education Officers. They should be well facilitated so that they are able to educate, sensitize and identify any hindrances in the implementation of the project. This is possible because they are better placed on ground.***

**7.0 GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Owing to the challenges above, it is clear that the results of the Registration of Learners Project are far from what government expected. The Committee therefore wishes to recommend generally as follows:

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1. **The Committee strongly recommends that the Auditor General should conduct a Forensic Audit on the entire Learners Project and this should include the procurement processes, method of recruitment, level of facilitation and mode of payment to the Enrollment Officers. NIRA Management should be held responsible for failure to pay some Project staff, who todate, still demand payment of their allowances.**
2. **The Committee further recommends that for the Project to be successful; there should be regular monitoring/evaluation by the mother Ministry and adequate sensitization and continuous awareness among all the stakeholders.**
3. **The Committee also recommends that the remuneration of implementers of such an important project should be in tandem with the prevailing economic situation.**
4. **The Committee further recommends that future requests for supplementary should be in line with the Public Finance Management Act (PFM) 2005.**
5. **The Committee further recommends that the complaints of Enrollment Officers and other staff should be investigated and NIRA Management should be answerable for the pain caused to the Ugandans who were trying to earn a living.**



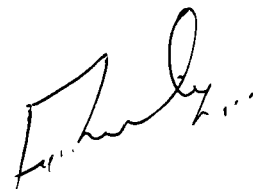
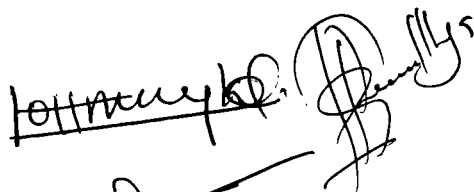
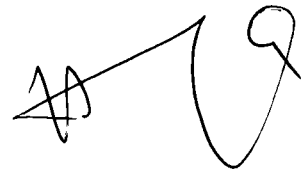
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## 8.0 CONCLUSION


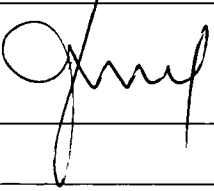

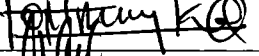



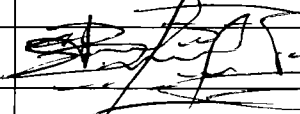
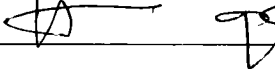
The Committee notes that official figures show that more than 48.1% of the population of Uganda is below the age of 15 years. As such, the success of the Learners' Project reflects the success of the NIRA Registration of Persons exercise as a whole. It is therefore pertinent that the Project is managed with the clout it deserves and that those managing it be held accountable for its success or failure.

The above recommendations are therefore required to be implemented so as to ensure that the project be managed successfully.

**Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, I beg to move.**



**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON THE LEANERS' PROJECT UNDER THE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NIRA)**

No	NAME	PARTY	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Nabakooba Judith, Chairperson	NRM	
2	Hon. Mbogo Kezekiah, V/Chairperson	NRM	
3	Hon. Abiriga Ibrahim	NRM	
4	Hon. Mugabe Kahonda Dononzio	NRM	
5	Hon. Kamugo Pamela Nasiyo	NRM	
6	Hon. Lokwang Hillary	NRM	
7	Hon. Muyanja Mbabali	NRM	
8	Hon. Nakawunde Sarah	NRM	
9	Hon. Rwemulikya Ibanda	NRM	
10	Hon. Oseku Richard Oriebo	NRM	
11	Hon. Ssekikubo Theodore	INDP.	
12	Hon. Munyagwa Mubarak	FDC	
13	Hon. Gilbert Olanya	FDC	
14	Hon. Fungaroo Hassan Kaps	FDC	
15	Hon. Muwanga Kivumbi	DP	
16	Hon. Najjuma Sarah	NRM	
17	Hon. Kato Lubwama	DP IND	
18.	Hon. Kulaigye Felix	Army Rep.	