

New Book Sounds the Alarm on “Desperate” Need for Educational Transformation

Author Available for Interviews

WHAT:

You Can't Make “Fish Climb Trees”: *Overcoming Educational Malpractice through Authentic Learning* by author and scholar, Lawrence Muganga, was released August 3. In the book, Muganga discusses the global educational system's inability to successfully transition graduates to the workforce. He then shares proposed first steps to initiate change.

As a student that passed through the education system in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), I underwent the dehumanizing experience of robotically following instructions, copying examples from a blackboard, and memorizing information to regurgitate on the next examination before forgetting it all moments later. Bells demarcated sections of the day into artificial divisions, desks arranged students into orderly rows, and teachers droned on and on. But, in nearly 20 years of education, I never actually learned anything. Except realizing the gross inadequacies of our school systems.

Although removed by more than 30 years of time and separated by worlds, today's education systems, in Canada, Africa, and throughout the world, remain largely the same. The world outside of the school walls has rapidly evolved, yet the school system, at all levels, still controls students and feeds them meaningless information that renders them impotent in today's knowledge-based or creative economy. Students don't learn how to solve important problems that affect the real world or develop their talents, which shrivel uselessly to nothing in the wasteland of academia.

However, it is not only students that suffer. Many teachers feel trapped by the institutionalized bureaucracy that forces them to reproduce the same system that oppressed them as students. They look out into the homogenized masses of students to which they dictate isolated facts and see their own anguish reproduced in the faces of each learner. Teachers, like students, lose their passion, their drive, their motivation to follow their dreams and instill true knowledge into young minds. The effects of the education field, like ripples in the ocean, spread out and permeate every industry, leaving enormous skills gaps in crucial fields which graduates, ill-prepared from their industrial-age education, lack the soft skills to adequately fill.

So how do we remedy the ills that have befallen the modern school system? The answer lies in a cutting-edge educational paradigm known as authentic learning, which, in short, means realistic learning in a real-life context. It means breaking down the walls of the school and taking education into the community. It means producing a tangible product that society can use. It means teaching students the soft skills, such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity, that will enable their success in the real world.

I have spent the last several years in Edmonton, working for the Alberta Government, raising a family, volunteering in the community, and pursuing a doctorate in Education. During this time, I have observed the struggles of children who often get left behind, even in Alberta's supposedly advanced education system. After living most of my life in Africa, I had envisioned Canadian schooling as vastly superior to that in SSA. However, I was shocked to discover that it suffered from the same systematic flaws as that in Africa, a startling experience that inspired this book.

This book explores the phenomenon of authentic learning and the way in which it will help overcome the problem of educational malpractice and prepare students for the creative economy, where, rather than sitting behind desks and carrying out orders, people can find their true niche in the world and control their own destiny. The first step in realizing this dream lies between the pages of *You Can't Make Fish Climb Trees*.

Let's stop this educational malpractice and stop teaching fish how to climb trees. Let's break down the walls and take our learning outside of the classroom and into the real world.

You Can't Make “Fish Climb Trees”: *Overcoming Educational Malpractice through Authentic Learning* was published by FriesenPress Canada and is now available at: FriesenPress Bookstore, Amazon, Chapters & Indigo, Barnes and Noble, Google Books, iTunes Bookstore and Kobo Bookstore. (\$9.99 - eBook; \$24.99 - paperback; and \$36.49 - hardcover.)

WHEN/WHERE:

Author Lawrence Muganga is available to discuss his new book by appointment. Please email him at mugangalaw@gmail.com to schedule a time.