



Kakooza (centre) and Holma secretary for education Jackson Muliindambura at Wambabya Primary School in Kiziranfumbi sub-county, Hoima district recently. Photo by Robert Atuhairwe

Govt secures sh720b to improve education quality

FUNDING

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By Robert Atuhairwe

The Government has secured \$200m (about sh720b) to improve the country's quality of education.

The funds are from the Global Partnership in Education and World Bank.

Of the sh720b, sh360b is a grant obtained from the Global Partnership in Education (GPE) as phase II.

The Government is finalising the implementation of phase I of this grant. Implementation of Uganda's first GPE grant of \$100m (about sh360b) began in 2015 and involved training teachers in early grade reading in local languages and English, as well as training school management committees and headteachers in 972 schools in targeted districts, among other things.

GPE is an international organisation which supports 65 developing countries to ensure that every child receives quality basic education. It prioritises the poorest, most vulnerable and those living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

The rest of the money, sh360b, is a loan from the World Bank under the Inter-governmental Fiscal Transfers. It is part of a bigger chunk of funds to the Government of Uganda, totalling to \$150m (about sh540b). The balance of the money amounting to \$50m (about sh180b) has been allocated to the health sector.

The education ministry permanent secretary, Alex Kakooza, said the funds would be used at the start of the coming financial year.

Kakooza made the revelation recently while addressing parents and local leaders at Rumogi Primary School in Kiziranfumbi sub-county, Hoima district. He was launching a sh1.4b education infrastructure improvement project supported by World Vision.

Kakooza said the funding would cater for the construction of secondary schools in each sub-county or a primary school in each parish. The government policy is to set up a public secondary school in each sub-county.

By 2015, there were over 270 sub-counties without a public secondary school. The number of sub-counties without a single public secondary school has since reduced, although the actual number was not established. The Government policy is also to establish a public primary school in each parish.

"This will be an increase in the School Facilitation Grant (SFG); the money government disburses to local governments for infrastructure and supervision. It will be used to construct infrastructure such as classrooms, teachers' houses and latrines," Kakooza said at the function in Hoima.

He said the funding would improve infrastructure such as the number of classrooms and improve access as well as quality of education across the country.

Kakooza said the funds from World

BENEFICIARY SCHOOLS

The beneficiary schools under the World Vision funding include Rumogi and Wambabya primary schools in Kiziranfumbi

Bank were meant to strengthen decentralisation in the sectors of health and education.

He said the education ministry would come up with a formula to determine the amount of money that would be sent to each of the districts.

Kakooza said the fund would increase the amount of money spent on the inspection and operation of the district education officers, as well as the school inspectors. He said in certain cases, some of the schools would just be rehabilitated.

In a separate phone interview yesterday, Kakooza said the Government was having discussions on the modalities of using the GPE funds.

"But we hope that the funds will also be invested in improving schools infrastructure and effective teaching."

The Sate Minister for Higher

Education, Chrysostom Muyingo, also said the GPE and World Bank funding are meant to improve the country's quality of education.

"As part of the move to improve the country's quality of education, we must tighten inspection and monitoring on top of improving the infrastructure of our public schools," he said.

World Vision project launch

While commissioning the World Vision project last week, Kakooza asked local leaders to urge parents to provide lunch for their children at school, so as to curb absenteeism and poor performance tagged to hunger.

He said parents had a primary role in the education of their children, citing provision of scholastic materials such as books, pens and uniforms as well as lunch.

He said children may not always concentrate in class if they study on empty stomachs.

The beneficiary schools under the World Vision funding include Rumogi and Wambabya primary schools in Kiziranfumbi and Kakindo and Bineneza primary schools in Kyabigambire sub-county, both in Hoima district.

Each school will get three new classroom blocks and staff quarters accommodating eight teachers.

Kakooza commended World Vision for supporting the Government in

ABSENTEEISM

School heads were urged to sensitise residents against absenteeism, which stalls activities of the education sector

promoting education, but also asked parents to own the structures.

Mark Twinomugisha, the director for integrated programmes in World Vision, said the organisation had invested sh12b in 66 sites countrywide to benefit six million pupils in the current financial year.

He said the organisation was committed to supporting education and health improvement.

Kadiri Kirungi, the district chairperson, urged school heads and local leaders to sensitise residents regarding absenteeism, which, he said, was stalling the activities of the education sector.

Apprearing before the parliamentary committee on education last week, the education minister, Mrs. Janet Museveni, said in the next financial year they would mainly focus on the construction and rehabilitation of classrooms and latrine facilities in selected primary schools, procurement of books, training of members of boards and headteachers for the new grant-aided schools and finalisation of civil works for workshops.

Other things they would focus on are the construction of an incubation centre and laboratories in the eight beneficiary universities and construction of structures at Uganda Petroleum Institute Kigumba, among others.

Under the 2018-2019 budget, the education sector has been allocated sh2.5 trillion. Of the total allocation, sh1.5 trillion is for wages, sh498m is non-wage expenditure, sh262m is for development while sh336m is external financing.