

No money to recruit more teachers - govt

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KAMPALA. Lack of money has stalled recruitment of 4,700 teachers, hindering service delivery in public schools countrywide, officials have said.

The Uganda National Teachers' Union (Unatu) puts the current teacher gap at 100,000. The permanent secretary in the Education ministry, Mr Alex Kakooza, said they had planned to reduce the gap by 4,700 this financial year but could not find the proposed Shs48 billion in their budget as to effect the recruitment. The money was meant to recruit primary and secondary teachers, tutors for technical schools and nurses for training colleges.

"We were supposed to recruit 4,700 teachers this financial year. The entire budget was to cost us Shs48 billion to recruit and upgrade those whose qualifications have since changed. This money was not in the budget," Mr Kakooza told journalists yesterday ahead of the World Teachers' Day tomorrow.

Finance speaks out

Mr Jim Mugunga, the Finance ministry spokesperson, said: "Our duty as Finance is to release funds as appropriated by Parliament. It is the line ministry who are responsible for budgeting and planning for recruitment in liaison with the Education Service Commission."

Unatu general secretary James Tweheyo said some schools such as Sembabule Primary School lack 13 teachers, which should urgently be addressed because those working there are overstretched with a high pupil enrolment.

"Teachers should be held as heroes and heroines for shouldering Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education for the last 20 years and reaching where we are," Mr Tweheyo said.

He added: "Imagine a teacher handling more than 300 pupils every day in an unfinished classroom using stones as their tables and chairs. We need support."

Mr Tweheyo appealed to parents not to send their children to school tomorrow as teachers will be celebrating their day.