Mukono primary teachers trained on new curriculum

By Henry Nsubuga

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Primary school teachers at the workshop on the new competence-based curriculum

Many Ugandan teachers are struggling to use the new teaching approach that was rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Sports, educationists in Mukono district have said. This was revealed during a recent workshop organised by the Mukono municipality education department and the municipal headteachers' association, in collaboration with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC).

Speaking at the workshop, Lawrence Lugoloobi, a retired headteacher of St. Kizito Primary School Lutengo in Mukono, said many teachers are not ready to teach using the new approach.

PROPER TRAINING FOR TEACHERS

"School headteachers and the Government should ensure that teachers are properly trained on the competency-based curriculum so that they can equip learners with the right knowledge," Lugoloobi said. He added that many pupils struggled to interpret questions, reason logically, and apply knowledge to real-life situations, which directly affected their performance in subjects such as Social Studies. During the release of the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), the executive director, Dan Odongo, explained that the examinations were designed to assess learners' ability to apply knowledge and solve challenges rather than rely on routine memorisation, which aligns with the principles of the competency-based curriculum.

CONCERNS OF PLE RESULTS

The training was in response organised to seek answers to the problem. It was held at Uganda Martyrs Junior School Namilyango, attracted nearly 600 Primary Seven teachers. Susan Wamala Sserunkuuma, the chairperson of Mukono Municipality Headteachers' Association, said the workshop was organised after headteachers and teachers expressed concern about last year's PLE results.

According to the 2025 PLE results released by UNEB, Mukono Municipality registered 7,776 candidates. Of these, 2,527 passed in Division One, 3,977 in Division Two, 704 in Division Three, and 307 in Division Four. A total of 204 candidates were in Division U, while 57 did not sit the examinations, despite being registered.

In Mukono district, 16,535 candidates registered for the exams. A total of 2,658 passed in Division One, 8,538 in Division Two, 2,719 in Division Three, and 1,303 in Division Four. A total of 1,049 candidates obtained Division U, while 268 did not sit the exams, compared to 330 in 2024.

Esther Nassanga, the Mukono Municipal Education Officer, said the results were below expectations. "We expected to be among the top five nationally as it has always been, but we were shocked to be in the 10th position. We decided to return to the drawing board early enough by retooling our teachers," Nassanga said.

EXPERTS FAULT TEACHERS

During the workshop, Santos Cale, a science curriculum specialist from NCDC, criticised teachers for relying on theoretical teaching.

"I wonder how a teacher can teach about the heart, lungs and intestines in science and end by only drawing diagrammes on the blackboard, instead of bringing real examples such as animal organs for illustration," Cale said.

He also faulted schools for over-testing learners using examination papers purchased from exam bureaus.

He said such examinations contain poorly structured questions that mislead learners and sometimes cover topics that have not yet been taught. "This demotivates learners because they are tested on content they have not studied," Cale said.

Gertrude Namubiru, a mathematics curriculum specialist at NCDC, said many teachers have been implementing the curriculum incorrectly by introducing concepts midway instead of building them gradually.

She emphasised the need to teach mathematics using examples from learners' everyday surroundings so they can connect classroom knowledge to real-life experiences. "This kind of teaching is not just about passing exams, but about preparing learners for day-to-day life," Namubiru said.

SHIFT IN TEACHING APPROACH

Sserunkuuma said a review of the 2025 PLE results revealed that many teachers lack sufficient understanding of competency-based teaching.

"Teachers must remember that learners should be given time to conduct their own research, while teachers guide them," Sserunkuuma said.

Norah Annet Wambuzi, a social studies and Christian religious education teacher at Mukono Boarding Primary School, also noted that some teachers still rely on lecture-style teaching instead of adopting the learner-centred approach. "It is high time we stopped teaching primary school pupils the same way lecturers teach university

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