

Poor primary schools performance in Busoga

EDITOR: I have listened to and read in newspapers lots of lamentations and accusations about poor primary schools performance in Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) in eastern Uganda.

There have also been accusations from parents and Government officials that teachers are responsible for the children's poor performance in PLE.

Parents accuse teachers of being solely responsible for their children's performance, forgetting that they too have a lot to contribute to the success or failure of their children.

Parents responsibility doesn't stop at paying school dues and providing other educational requirements. They should monitor their children's performance through school visits and talking to the teachers about their performance. It is the

parent's responsibility to instil discipline in their children.

One gets the impression that very few rural primary schools have active parent/teachers associations. One wonders whether those which still have them do have regular meetings. In boarding schools, for some parents, visitation or invitation to the school for a meeting is for the parent to take things to eat. The reason for the invitation is inconsequential.

Opinion leaders need to sensitise parents about the fact that they are part of the educational triangle in the education of their children. The triangle is child/parent/teacher. Each of the three points on that triangle has a very important part to play in the child's performance.

Education officials allege that teachers

don't teach, absent themselves from school and are incompetent. These accusations may be true with some teachers. There are, however, areas that need to be investigated. For example, since the introduction of decentralisation, districts recruit only people who hail from the particular district. This has one serious shortcoming.

A district may not have enough trained people for all the available vacancies. It, therefore, means, the district, will take on anybody from the district even people with questionable qualifications or competence. Some allegedly bribe to get teaching jobs.

If true, it is a serious problem for two reasons: The people who have the ability to bribe may not be the best qualified for the job. Some carry forged certificates.

These have not been to a training institution. These are the ones who tarnish the image of the trained teachers. Secondly, a person may have been to a training institution but has not been given a job. He/she borrows money to pay for the job. That person is inevitably hurt. The system will be very lucky for such a person to work to the best of his/her ability.

There is this question of poor morale due to poor remuneration. I don't think yesterday's teachers, those who taught some of us, were better remunerated than today's teachers. Their morale was high and were among the most respected members of society. The cause of this poor morale needs to be investigated.

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Schools should

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