

Buhweju leaders ask govt for special education intervention

Unattractive. The leaders say many teachers shun teaching in the district because it is a hard-to-reach area.

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BUHWEJU. Leaders in Buhweju have asked government to design a special education programme for the district to attract teachers and keep children in school.

The area MP, Mr Francis Mwijukye, said teachers don't want to work in the district because it is a hard-to-reach and remote area.

"Buhweju is a hard-to-reach area and also a hard one to stay in. You find children moving 3km to access school. That's the same with teachers. It is difficult to serve in the area," Mr Mwijukye said.

He added: "We do not have enough head teachers. There are no [staff] quarters for them, there is no electricity, and there are no good roads. This doesn't encourage teachers from other areas to work in the district."

"Buhweju is a difficult area to work in due to its poor terrain yet we are not getting hard-to-reach allowance... We, therefore, ask government to consider it as a special needs district and design unique interventions for it,"

GEORGE PATRICK SABITI, BUHWEJU DISTRICT INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Canon Jackson Tukahirwa, the head teacher of Nsika Primary School, said lack of decent accommodation for teachers is one of the biggest challenges affecting the education sector in the area.

Many teachers are accommodated in mud and wattle houses.

"The staff quarters are not descent, teachers stay in rooms with uncemented floor and un-



On the ground. Buhweju MP Francis Mwijukye addresses pupils and parents of Nsika Primary School in Buhweju District recently. Mr Mwijukye, said teachers don't want to work in the district because it is a hard-to-reach and remote area. PHOTO BY FELIX AINEBYONA

plastered walls, which makes a teacher dislike the profession and most of them run away from the district to where there are decent accommodation facilities," Mr Tukahirwa said.

The district inspector of schools, Mr George Patrick Sabiti, said government should

consider Buhweju 'a special needs district' and design special [education] intervention for transforming it.

"Buhweju is a difficult area to work in due to its poor terrain yet we are not getting hard-to-reach allowance, we have poor means of transport, and accom-

modation challenges. The education sector is poorly staffed. We, therefore, ask government to consider Buhweju as a special needs district and design unique interventions for it," Mr Sabiti said.

He added that many parents cannot afford sanitary pads for girls and other necessities for school going children.

School dropout

Ms Loicy Rwankangi, the district councillor for Burere Sub-county and secretary for gender and community-based services, said children trek long distances in search of water. This has made many of them to drop out of school.

"Children are the ones who fetch water in their families and they trek a distance of about 8km, which takes approximately three hours, and because they fetch water in the morning, they cannot reach school in time and this makes them lose morale and end up dropping out," Ms Rwankangi said.

ABOUT BUHWEJU

Creation. Buhweju District was carved out of Bushenyi District in July 2010.

Schools. It has 53 government-aided primary schools but only 20 of them have substantive head teachers. There are only four secondary schools in the district. Staffing. The staffing level is at 65 per cent, according to the district records.

School enrolment. Out of the 1,670 pupils who registered for Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) last year, 1,628 completed. This year, 1,753 pupils registered for PLE but 77 of them had already dropped out by time of mock examinations. Some of the school dropout go to work in gold mines and tea plantations.