

Govt to recruit 5,000 science, English teachers in 2018/19

The plan. Government will use the money that had been allocated to enhance salaries of science teachers for recruitment of teachers.

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KAMPALA. Government has finally, for the first time in seven years, given a green light to Ministry of Education to recruit about 5,000 science and English language teachers in the budget presented yesterday.

Ms Connie Nakayenze, the Parliamentary Committee on education chairperson, told *Daily Monitor* in an interview early this week that Public Service, Finance and Education ministries together with the committee had agreed to use the proposed salary increment allocations for science teachers to recruit teachers with the balance shared equitably across board.

"We advised government to use the money to recruit 2,000 more science teachers," she said.

However, she added that government had instead agreed to recruit 1,900 science teachers and 1,100 English language teachers with the balance distributed among the science and arts teachers equally with a 20 per cent salary increment each.

Initially, government had proposed Shs98b for salary enhancement for science teachers alone which would see a graduate teacher earn Shs2m from just Shs600,000 per month.

The increment, some argued, would distort the structure given that the head teacher would take home Shs2.06m with their deputy earning Shs1.76m.

Thus the Parliamentary Committee rejected the proposal and met the President who had pledged the salary enhancement for only science teachers.

"The increment was ... unfair. All teachers need to be rewarded equally," Ms Nakayenze, who is also the Mbale Woman MP, said.

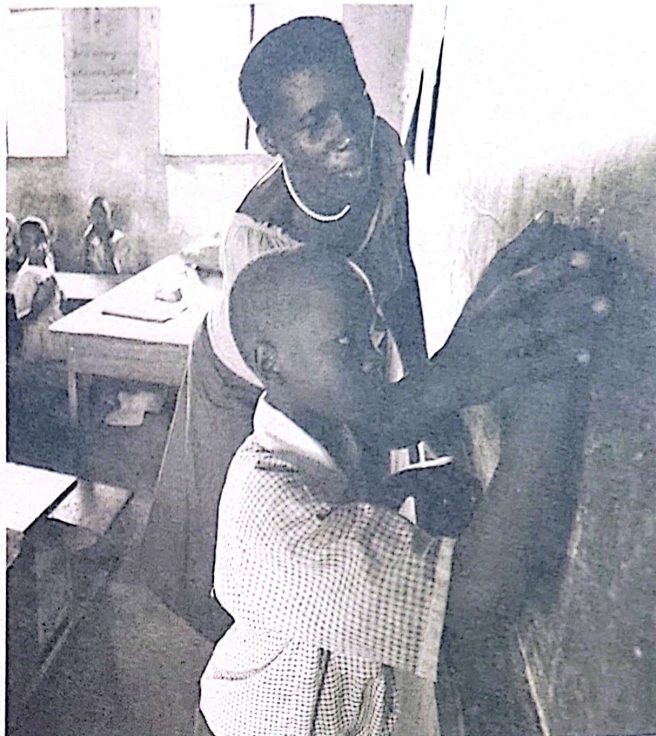
In total, the Finance Ministry has allocated Shs2.7 trillion to Ministry of Education and Sports up from Shs2.5 trillion from the 2017/18 financial year.

However, according to Mr Alex Kakooza, the Education ministry permanent secretary, there is concern that more than 50 per cent of the allocations will go to wages.

"Salaries will take Shs1.59 trillion. That is huge. Just imagine if your company was paying salaries more than it earns. It will collapse," he said in an interview.

About Shs22b will go to the newly created 100 grant aided secondary schools, Shs15b to sports while Shs10b will be used to kick start the process of turning Mountains of the Moon, Busoga University and Gulu University Constituent College in Karamoja into public universities.

Although Mr Kakooza was non-committal on salary enhancement, he confirmed the planned recruitment of science teachers.



OTHER ISSUES TEACHERS WANT ADDRESSED

Institution heads: All education institutions must be headed by substantive head teachers and deputies and not care takers

Teachers upgrading: Teachers who have upgraded must be reassigned and given what is due to them. Some teachers have stayed with similar roles even after upgrading, which demotivates them.

Infrastructure: Schools that lack infrastructure such as latrines and classrooms, among others, must be upgraded and given necessary facilities to create a favourable environment.

Understaffing: Schools must be

provided with enough teachers.

Staff policy: The policy used to determine the number of teachers in a school should be revised. This is because it doesn't cater for maternity leave, sick leave and any other genuine absence from duty. If a female teacher goes on maternity leave for 60 working days that is a full term. But the policy allows one teacher per class. The school has no other source of income to recruit another teacher.

Teaching gaps at primary level: More than 20,000 primary teachers are needed while secondary schools want more than 4,000 teachers.

He also said there are other pressures such as the need to rollout the revised secondary curriculum, which needs Shs2b.

However, the enhanced allocation must come with results, which according to Prof Augustus Niwagaba, a development economist, failures of which the problem will be something else.

"If they don't perform, that [will not] be the problem of financing," he said.

Teachers, through Uganda National Teachers' Union (Unatu), have, however, maintained that their June 23 ultimatum, still stands, and government must not attempt to increase salaries of some teachers and leave out others.

Mr Filbert Baguma, the Unatu

secretary general, early this week told *Daily Monitor* that while they appreciate government's consideration of the science teachers, this should be uniform because all teachers work under the same conditions.

"If government is looking at the quality of education, it has to stop discrimination of salaries. Payment should be according to qualifications. The increment we expect to see is for both science and arts teachers. Short of that, we have no choice but to go on with industrial action," he said.

The teachers also demand that government makes good on the 15 per cent salary increment, which was only paid to primary teachers in the 2016/17 financial year.