

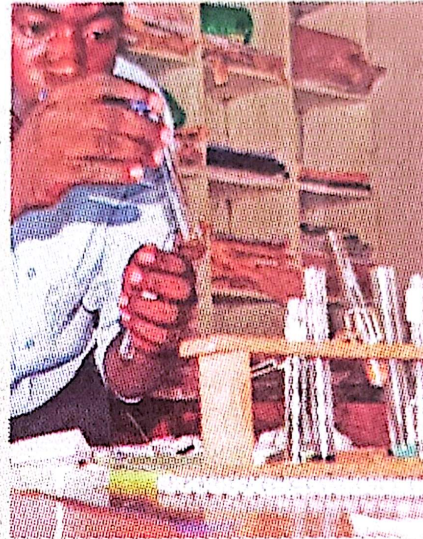
Poor academic performance is caused by poor govt policies

Head teachers in Lyantonde District might soon lose their jobs as the district education officer, Mr Bernard Byaruhanga has reportedly indicated (see: *Daily Monitor*, December 8). He is upset by the continued poor performance in science subjects in secondary schools of the district.

"We cannot accept to continue with students scoring F9 in science subjects. I will at least suspend poor performing teachers," Mr Byaruhanga said. The district education committee, has scheduled a meeting on December 11 to discuss the issue.

Nearly every week, the media carries stories about poor academic performance from across the country, especially in government-aided schools. The big question is, what are the causes of poor performance in public schools? Poor performance in science or any other subject has little to do with efforts of teachers or students. However, it is more about the current education system.

The big challenge lies in today's mode of learning, which emphasises



scoring high grades, but not comprehending the subject matter.

Secondly, looking at the teaching curriculum in universities and colleges, you realise that no serious treatment is given to motivation and classroom management, which lie at the heart of true learning.

Both the mode of teaching and the curriculum content have limited concern for the life experience of students.

Educators know that people can learn, but what kills this spirit are

issues such as the struggle to score best grades. Another challenge is that many students report to school on empty stomach, which makes it nearly impossible to concentrate in class. Besides, both teachers and students absenteeism, for example, are matters of great concern for the Education ministry.

But before Lyantonde District education moves to axe the head teachers, the country needs clear answers to the issues raised above. What is clear today is that the Education ministry is only dealing with the symptoms of the problem and not the fundamentals.

Going forward, there is need to review our education system with the view of designing a robust and more comprehensive solution to the poor performance challenge.

This will necessitate that we stop politicking over the matter. For the last 31 years, the country has failed to evolve this new thinking, the result of which is continuing poor academic performance

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