

TEACHERS' HOUSES SHOULD BE A PRIORITY IF THE GOVERNMENT IS TO CONTROL ABSENTEEISM RATES

By David Lumu

The Government has earmarked sh1.3 trillion for the construction of houses for teachers in various primary and secondary schools and revamping of infrastructure in universities.

According to the 2018/2019 budget framework paper, in the primary education sector, sh2.6b will be earmarked from the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) and sh32b from the local government budget for the construction of classrooms, teachers' quarters and supply of desks for government-aided primary schools in Kampala.

A total of sh1.3b has been earmarked for the purchase of land to build Kalinabiri Primary School, while sh80m has been proposed for the purchase of lightning arrestors that will be installed in 11 primary schools in the districts of Iganga, Kibale, Kasese, Luuka, Busia, Pallisa, Hoima, Kole, Mubende and 15 primary schools in Butambala district.

To implement the government policy of constructing a primary school per parish, a government secondary school in every sub-county and a technical school in every constituency and district, the Government has proposed sh8.8b for the construction of 12 secondary schools in sub-counties without any.

The Government states in the budget framework that the main reason they are proposing to construct teachers' houses is to improve staff welfare.

Reports, including the World Development Report 2018 (WDR 2018), *Learning to Realize Education's Promise*, has attributed the high level of teacher absenteeism in Uganda to the lack of accommodation for teachers, especially in up country government primary and secondary schools.

Haji Swaibu Kawooya, the headteacher of Police Children's School, said the construction of teachers' houses should be a priority if the Government is to deal with absenteeism rates.

"The rate of absenteeism is affecting the quality of education. Teachers dodge classes and when you asked why, they say: 'I did not have transport.' Therefore, construction of teachers' houses as proposed in the budget framework paper is a good idea because everyone wants to see a happy teacher," he said.

Kawooya added: "The problem, however, is that after proposing such good ideas, the Government caps the resource envelope, citing other priorities. Our prayer as teachers is that this time round, the Government gives priority to teachers' houses the way they have been giving priority to infrastructure in previous budgets."

According to Rebecca Bisaaso, the headteacher of Namasale Seed SS in Amolator district,

Sh1 trillion earmarked for teachers' houses



Twin staff houses constructed for Moroto High School by the Karamoja Affairs Ministry in 2016. Government has earmarked sh. 1 trillion for teachers' houses this year



Makerere Business School (MUBS) administration block. Sh1.1 trillion has been earmarked for the purchase of specialised ICT equipment for MUBS

LIST OF SCHOOLS

- Ryakasinga Centre for High Education, Sheema
- Kyayi Seed SS, Gomba
- Samson Kalibbala SS, Rakai
- Lukome SS, Gulu
- Ongino SS, Kumi
- Kamuronko SS, Kabale
- Kasule Seed SS, Kyegegwa
- St. Theresa Girls SS, Nyamugisa, Masindi
- St. Kizito Banda SS, Mityana
- Buwambo Seed SS
- Kibuku Senior School
- Kaliro High School
- Mbale School for the Deaf
- Kabukunge Muslim SS, Kalungu
- St. Anne SS Ntuusi, Ssemabule
- Abongomola Seed SS, Apac
- Iguli Girls SS, Dokolo
- Kadungulu SS, Serere
- Bukalasi S.S Bududa

the construction of teachers' houses should be crafted in the wider need of building a fully-fledged school with teachers' quarters, laboratories, library and classrooms.

"The houses must be big enough to accommodate the families of the teachers. In some cases, they are building single rooms or two rooms. This leaves out family members of teachers out of the picture. The other thing is the fact that in most seed schools, there is no infrastructure on the ground," she said.

However, under the budget

Recruitment of primary and secondary school teachers is the other priority that the Government has set

proposals, the Government plans to construct ventilated improved pit latrines for teachers, build administration blocks, furnish classrooms and erect a 5,000 litre water tank in 83 primary schools.

Recruitment of primary and secondary school teachers is the other priority that the Government has set within the education sector framework for the sh2.7 trillion proposed 2018/2019 education sector budget.

Of the sh2.7 trillion proposed budget, the wage bill, including salaries for teachers, is sh1.4 trillion, similar to the wage bill for the last financial year, 2017/2018.

Sh1 trillion for MUBS

According to the framework paper, sh1.1 trillion has been earmarked for the purchase of specialised equipment for Makerere University Business School (MUBS), construction of an access road at the campus and a perimeter wall around the campus in Bugolobi.

The Government has proposed to set aside sh1.1 trillion to rehabilitate lecture halls at MUBS and also help a business school to buy laptops.

According to Prof. Walter Balunywa, the principal of MUBS, the proposed sh1.1 trillion for the business school to purchase specialised equipment is a timely gesture from the Government.

"What is happening worldwide is that ICT is dominating every sector. Unfortunately, for Uganda, we do not have money to buy specialised equipment and even the Internet does not teach management for the country, the specialised equipment will help us face the challenges and prepare our students adequately for the modern world," he said.

At Muni University, the Government has proposed sh3.5b to install solar power systems, complete the perimeter wall, build a multipurpose science laboratory and rehabilitate old structures.

For Soroti University, sh2.2b has been earmarked for the construction of medical laboratories.

The construction of an office block, the faculty of computing and female and male hostels at Mbarara University has been allocated sh2.6b.

For Kabale University, the sh95m, the Government proposes, will facilitate the construction of a science lecture building, while sh2.9b will go to Lira University for the construction of an administration block. Gulu University will get sh89b to equip and furnish laboratories for the faculty of science, agriculture and medicine. A total of sh1.4b has been set aside for the laboratory construction at Makerere University.

"The sector has additionally allocated funds for re-tooling through procurement of laptops, computers, office desks and chairs. Others are motor vehicles, printers, photocopiers, CCTV systems, servers and back-up media for National Curriculum Development Centre, UNEB, Gulu University, MUBS," the budget framework paper states.

The Government has also proposed to construct a classroom block, two dormitories, a library and a computer laboratory at the Uganda Petroleum Institute, Kigumba.