

Let us value education, respect professionals

EDITOR: I write in response to an article written by Godfrey Olukya, titled: *Striking doctors must be replaced* that appeared in the *New Vision* of Thursday, November 16, on page 19.

In that article, Olukya indicated that he does not "agree with public servants holding the Government at ransom over the increase in salaries yet the country's tax base is low." He further postulated that, "there are millions of people willing to work for the salaries being earned by those people (doctors), or even less.

I appreciate the fact that Uganda's tax base is low. Essentially, the Government would set priorities for its expenditure rather than engage in spendthrift behaviour. People must work in a conducive atmosphere for them to deliver effectively. Olukya is

calling upon the Government to sack the doctors on strike because "there are millions who are willing to work at the current salaries." Indeed, Olukya's postulation lacks logical insight.

The total supply of specialised labour is not perfectly inelastic as higher wage rates are likely to draw extra workers into the labour force and may induce some workers to work longer hours. But the question is: What induces the owners of factors of production to allocate them to particular uses?

In answering this question, the principle of equal net advantage becomes relevant. It states that the owners of factors of production will move those factors between different uses until there is no further advantage, monetary or otherwise.

Does Olukya know what it takes to

train a doctor? When you say "let them quit" do you have a flooded labour market of such workers?

You ostensibly, though unwittingly sound sympathetic about Uganda's low tax base. But the same Government has never failed to raise money to finance political transactions. Why would someone whose minimum qualifications required is a Senior Six certificate earn sh20m a month and a doctor earns sh700,000? The Government should value education by nesting salaries and wages to levels of education. Otherwise, you cannot claim that quality of healthcare is improving yet health centres and hospitals lack adequate facilities and doctors are leaving the country to get better remunerations.

Enock Kibuuka

Gayaza High School

PICTURE BY WILFRED SANYA

