

Decision. Education Permanent Secretary says government is formulating a policy to rationalise levying of fees in both public and private schools

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KAMPALA. The government has directed all government schools and private institutions not to increase tuition beginning next year until the Education ministry finalises the unit cost of training a child.

Speaking at a ministry of Education sector review workshop yesterday, Education Permanent Secretary Alex Kakooza said government is formulating a policy to rationalise levying of fees in both public and private schools.

He said a circular will be issued directing schools not to increase fees beginning January as the ministry's technical team finalises putting up the unit cost.

"We are going to issue a circular on fees policy to schools," Mr Kakooza said.

Following public outcry against tuition increment in February, Education minister Janet Museveni instituted a committee headed by Prof Frederick Kayanja, to review charges at primary and secondary levels and make recommendations to guide government on how to control charges in learning institutions across the country.

Mr Patrick Kaboyo, the general secretary of Federation of Non-state Education Institutions, said he was aware of the policy to regulate fees but were waiting for an official communication before they can offer their views. The association brings together directors of private schools across the country.

Caution

"You reap what you sow. If you want knowledge, you pay for what is measurable and not exorbitant. Quality education has to have a cost, but this cost has to be agreed upon. Regulation is not bad but dialogue is important," Mr Kaboyo said in an interview.

"I am aware that the ministry holds that position of regulating fees increment. As a federation, we shall convene and come up with a position," he added.

Schools across the country levy varying charges yet they offer the same education, prompting questions as to why students at the same level of education should be paying varying charges, or why some nursery school children should be paying higher fees than

Govt orders schools not to increase fees



Cost of learning. Makerere University students line up at a bank to pay their tuition in 2015. PHOTO BY ALEX ESAGALA

university students.

For instance, the government pays salaries of staff in their institutions besides undertaking infrastructural development such as classrooms and teachers houses.

But some of the traditional schools such as Gayaza High School, Ntare School, King's College Budo, Nabisunsa Girls School, Bweranyangi Girls, Mary Hill High School, Kibuli Secondary School, and Makerere College, all charge dues of not less than Shs1 million every term.

These charges exclude the large list of requirements that are demanded, which compare disproportionately against their counterparts in private schools whose charges take care of teachers' salaries, buying instructional materials and meeting schools' building needs.

The government also pays Shs41,000 for each student in private secondary schools

implementing the Universal Secondary Education while it also pays Shs37,000 per student in government-aided secondary schools.

Also under the Universal Primary Education programme, government fees for each pupil increased from Shs7,000 to the

current Shs10,000 per year.

The government's new move to regulate fees increments is thus aimed at protecting the public from being exploited by individuals who have invested in the education sector as a business, and not as a service.

In August, Mr Robinson Nsumba-Lyazi, the director of Basic Education at the Ministry of Education, said in an interview that they had been receiving many complaints from stakeholders that schools are overcharging them, forcing the ministry to establish a committee to look at school needs and guide the ministry on how to control school fees.

"Schools have tendencies of looking at many projects. They then stress parents to contribute money to implement them. Some schools want to buy buses. They want to construct swimming pools and laboratories at ago. Schools can't be built in a day. It is a process," Mr Nsumba-Lyazi said.

FEES STRUCTURE (2017)

St Mary's Namagunga	Shs1.7m
Mary's College Kisubi	Shs1.9m
Mary Hill HS	Shs916,000
Ntare School	Shs940,000
Mengo SS	Shs810,000
Ndege SS	Shs1.53m
Bweranyangi	Shs1m
Iganga High	Shs570,000
Mbale SS	Shs410,000
Manafwa High School	Shs350,000
Muni girls SS	Shs770,000
St Peter's, Nsambya	Shs900,000
St Henry, Kitovu	Shs1m