

LETTER OF THE DAY

Include teachers in policy-making process

EDITOR: I write to respond to the Ministry of Education and Sports advert that appeared in the *New Vision* of October 31, on page 21.

The advert was titled: *The 24th Annual Education and Sports Sector Review (ESSR) 7th – 8th November 2017*. The theme of this year's ESSR was indicated to be *Quality and Relevant Education for Social Economic Transformation: The Role of Key Stakeholders*.

The advert further averred that "the theme underscores the need for all stakeholders (political leaders, parents, teachers, learners, local governments, development partners, foundation bodies, private sector and line ministries) to work together to bring about the desired quality improvement in education and sports at all levels."

I carefully read the details of the

advert and discovered that neither practicing teachers nor students were invited. Let me be clear, you cannot talk about 'key stakeholders' in education and you do not mention teachers.

The ESSR is a crucial platform where strengths and challenges of Uganda's education sector are discussed and, thereafter, appropriate policies of intervention are adopted. I am aware that any policy that excludes the publics of the policy is bound to fail. In this case, the ministry invited only stakeholders at policy-making level and ignored the publics, yet at the same time the teachers and headteachers are key implementers.

The ministry may argue that the executive representative of the Uganda National Teachers Union was invited, but still practicing teachers were left

out. The ministry should have sampled around different regions of the country from selected schools to have about 20 teachers and/or headteachers and students participating as a reflective signal that we were included.

Any worthwhile planning must encourage the participation of those directly affected by the plans/policies. Otherwise, once the concerned people do not feel they are part of the process, they are likely to resent the policies.

Top-bottom approach of policy-making is obsolete. The education ministry should make teachers part of the process. The participants that the ministry invited are always in their air conditioned offices and understandably lack reality on the ground.

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PICTURE BY NANCY NANYONGA

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