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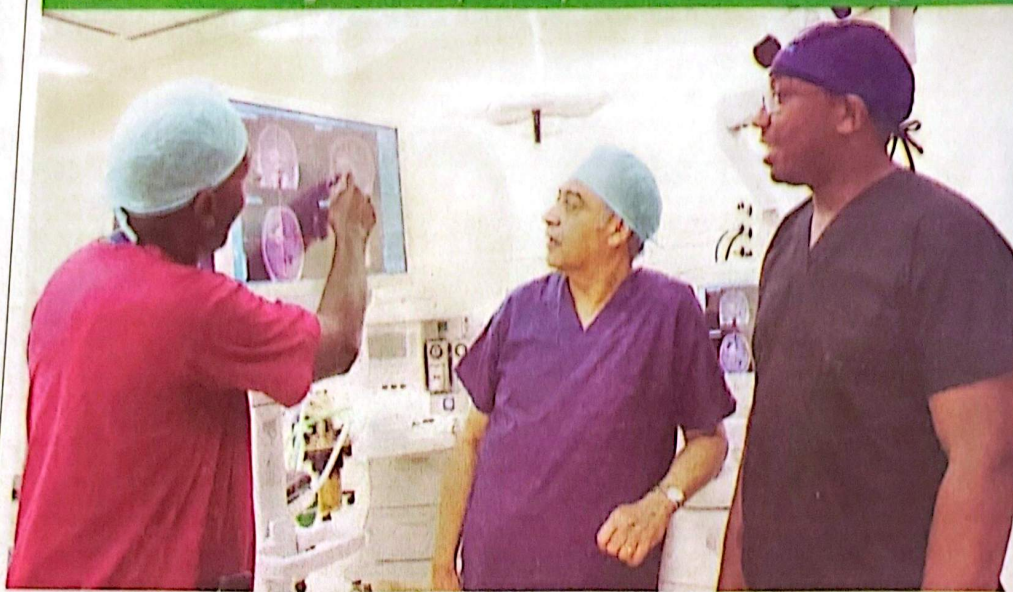
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Health services. Aga Khan hospital acquires advanced neuro surgery machine



Examining. Neuro surgeons at Aga Khan University Hospital, Mr Oluoch-Olunya (left), Mr Mahmood Qureshi (centre) and Dr Edwin Mogere (right), discuss the neuro navigation procedure. Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi, has become the first in sub-Saharan Africa to introduce a new advanced brain, head, neck and spine surgery technology. COURTESY PHOTO

Govt to phase out 870 USE schools

Reason. Government is phasing out private schools over failure to follow USE guidelines as some have inflated student numbers while others have failed to account for the funds.

BY PATIENCE AHIMBISIBWE
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KAMPALA. The Ministry of Education and Sports has resolved to stop funding 874 private secondary schools currently accommodating 416,237 students under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme.

This process starts in January next year and will be implemented in a phased manner with the completion date not yet clear.

Mr Ismail Mulindwa, the ministry of Education commissioner in charge of private schools, told *Sunday Monitor* last Friday that the government is phasing out the arrangement in which private schools have been helping in the implementation of the free secondary education programme introduced 10 years ago. But this will be done in phases, he noted.

"The phase-out will affect all public-private partnership schools, but government will not do it at once be-

cause it might cause paralysis. This will be planned as government builds capacity," he said.

"The phase-out will be based on failure of some schools to follow USE guidelines, as some have inflated student numbers while others have failed to account for the money they received," Mr Mulindwa said.

To start with, schools near the 100 community institutions which the government adopted to grant-aid this financial year will be dropped.

Government pays the schools Shs17,000 per student each term for those accessing free education.

Ministry of Education sources say private schools which the government funds have under performed in some aspects, hence the decision to phase them out and save Shs52 billion the government pays to these schools per year.

This money, the ministry says, will be committed to constructing government-owned facilities.

The money paid to private schools for USE students is meant for teachers salaries, constructing laboratories and classrooms, and buying teaching aids.

The private schools had wanted the money increased but the government did not honour their request. The

schools instead reacted by charging an extra fee from the USE beneficiaries, which the government says is illegal.

According to the phased programme, the private schools to be dropped last are those in the 260 sub-counties where the government has no secondary schools.

"Prosecute those culpable to send a message to others and review the process so that those seen to be in the red line are dropped and those doing well retained."

**PATRICK KABOYO, SECRETARY GENERAL
FEDERATION OF NON-STATE EDUCATION
INSTITUTIONS**

Government intends to first build secondary schools in those areas before de-listing the private schools from the USE programme. For example, Iganga Town Council has no USE school.

The schools to be dropped first from the programme, starting January next year, are those with very few USE students.

Mr Patrick Kaboyo, the secretary general of the Federation of Non-state Education Institutions, said the government's action is misconceived.

"Prosecute those culpable to send a message to others and review the process so that those seen to be in the red line are dropped and those doing well retained," Mr Kaboyo told *Sunday Monitor*.

Mr Kaboyo is critical of the USE programme, though, he said whereas the government had hoped it would increase access to secondary education, there are no significant completion rates at this level.

He said the government's unit cost has remained low compared to what their counterparts in the private sector charge, where some go to as high as Shs1m per term for a student.

Mr Robinson Nsumba-Lyazi, the director of basic and secondary education at the ministry of Education, said they are careful not to disrupt the education cycle of those who will be affected.

"We intend to pull out so that resources spent are used to establish government facilities. And we are very careful so that students don't leave school because of distance. We shall slowly do this as we build capacity in those areas going to be affected," Mr Nsumba-Lyazi said.

See full list of schools to be phased out on pages 8 & 9

In Life magazine,

- Read about Fortune Ssentamu who has a thrill for motorbikes.
- And also read about how Kitovu students have brought joy to Rachel Mirembe.

