

Education

Skills

Jobs

Vocational secondary schools in the offing

By Vivian Agaba

The Government has plans to introduce vocational education in lower secondary school as part of the proposed reforms for the curriculum review.

In the new development, the schools will have two wings of teaching; one for academics and the other for skills training.

Some of the skills areas the government will focus on in secondary schools include catering, carpentry and joinery, metal fabrication, technical drawing, fashion and design.

Once the plans come into force, a specific time will be set when learners are required to be in class, engaged into theoretic learning, and time when they are supposed to be engaged in skills training.

The move is aimed at preparing learners to discover where their talents and interests lie early in life, so that they can determine for themselves what channel of education to take.

This was revealed by the commissioner of business, technical, vocational education and training (BTJET), Hajjat Safinah Kisu Museene, during a examiners training workshop held at the Fisheries Training Institute in Entebbe last week.

About 100 examiners from across the country are attending a 10-day training in



Deputy executive secretary of Uganda business and technical examinations board Wilfred Nahamya, Oyesigye and Museene during the training exercise at the fisheries institute in Entebbe, last week. Photo by Kennedy Oryema

competence-based assessment, focusing on examining students on practical skills, applied knowledge and appropriate attitudes.

Museene revealed that high level discussions are ongoing,

to come up with interventions and strategies on how to effect this proposal.

"We want to instill and promote skills among young people, right from Senior One to all levels, including at PhD

level. We want to move past the level of only having thinkers, to innovators that will move this country forward," she said.

"We still have parents and learners shunning vocational education because they believe

it is for those who have failed in the academic world.

"Vocational education is not for academic failures. Countries that have developed put a lot of focus on skills development, and we need to do the same,"

she added. She said according to the Skilling Uganda strategy, every constituency is supposed to have at least one technical institute. She said so far, 82 districts have technical institutes in each constituency, leaving a gap of 36 districts.

"After establishing at least one technical institute in every district in the country, we shall then move to introduce skills training in secondary schools, but this will be a gradual process," she said.

Museene also revealed that in the next financial year, the Government plans to re-equip and renovate over 70 technical institutions with teaching materials, computer laboratories and workshops to enable instructors effectively carry out their work.

Onesmus Oyesigye, an official from the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board, said the country lost out in vocational training as much emphasis was put on theoretical work, adding that it is time to focus on skills development for its people.

Christopher Paapa, an instructor at the Uganda College of Commerce in Tororo district, said the idea of vocationalisation of secondary education in Uganda is possible, as long as policy makers implement the plans.