

UK MPs demands review of Bridge schools funding

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KAMPALA. A section of United Kingdom Members of Parliament has recommended a review of funding to Bridge International Academies following on-site visits to Kenya and Uganda.

Bridge International gets funding from UK's Department for International Development (DfID).

The MPs report also recognises that Bridge is a contentious partner where they operate in Kenya and Uganda.

"DfID's support of low-fee private schools is controversial. It is imperative that the Department fully reviews available evidence when considering future support for such initiatives," the report reads in part.

Last year, Finance minister Matia Kasaija said government had ordered the closure of 63 Bridge schools because they were teaching pornography. The administration of the schools later ran to court seeking a reversal of the order, but court maintained the status quo.

Ministry of Education under secretary Aggrey Kibenge yesterday said they had notified Bridge school administrators that come February 2018, they won't be allowed to open unless they're licensed and meet the minimum standards.

In Kenya, the schools' operations are under threat owing "to an alleged lack of compliance with government regulations".

Concerns have also been raised about the higher cost of fees in Bridge schools, that benefit nearly 14,000 pupils in Uganda, with each required to pay between Shs50,000 to Shs100,000 per term.

Ms Christine Apiot, the Director of Academics at Bridge, welcomed International Development Committee's (IDC) findings saying it recognizes their contribution towards tackling education crisis.

IDC examines the expenditure, administration and policy of DfID.

FINDINGS

In their findings, the UK MPs drew on information from Kenya and Uganda as well as from their visits to the Bridge Academies in Kenya and Uganda as well as Nigeria.

The report acknowledges that "elements of Bridge's model are innovative, impressive and scalable."

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