

## CSOs urge government to address teacher shortage and fix funding gaps



From left: Pascal Muhangi, Economist at CSBAG; Musa Mugoya, Program Officer at ISER; and Elsie Kahunde, Program Associate at CSBAG, as they met with the Parliament's Committee on Education and Sports on 26/03/2025. (Photo: CSBAG)

**According to the MoES, by 2024, there were 129, 856 teachers on government payroll serving in 12,512 UPE schools with 7,953,933 pupils, translating into a national average pupil to teacher ratio of 61.25:1, which is above the standard of 53:1**

In a joint presentation to Parliament, Economist Pascal Muhangi from the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) urged the committee to provide adequate funding to address the shortage of teachers in Ugandan schools.

The presentation was made in the afternoon of Wednesday, 26th March, as they convened to scrutinize the Ministerial Policy Statement (MPS) of the Education Sector, as the second budget phase of the 2025/26 budget takes shape.

In a specific concern raised by Mr. Musa Mugoya, Program Officer at Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER), the committee was referred to the unfavourable audit outcomes revealed by the Auditor General Report for the Financial Year 2023/24.

"The 2024 Auditor general value for money report indicated that the Directorate of Education Standards (DES) has only 54 inspectors to run to around 8000 schools in Uganda which implies one inspector oversees 148 schools," Mr Mugoya said.

He added "the allocation criteria for the Inspection and monitoring funds only considers the number of schools in the district and no other factors such as the distance and the state of the transport network. This results in low inspection and monitoring coverage especially in districts with poor transport networks and with schools far apart from each other."

Mr Mugoya also highlighted that the displeasing situation in Uganda's education sector further strained by the shortage of teachers only worsens the already deplorable situation in Uganda's schools.

"The high pupil - teacher ratios negatively affect learning quality, as overcrowded classrooms limit individualized attention, increase teacher workload, and lead to lower learner engagement," he said.

He added "This situation undermines efforts to improve literacy, numeracy, and overall primary school performance."

Education enthusiasts therefore want government to address the above challenges since these greatly cripple the education sector learners bound to suffer the most damaging consequences.

### Address special needs learners' pains

In another concern, Mr Mugoya reported to the committee that "in 2023, learners with special needs accounted for only 1.97 per cent of the total primary school enrollment, falling short of the expected target of 16 per cent of children of school-going age."

He added "The dropout rates are high due to limited access to special schools and units, most of which are in urban areas. Additionally, many schools require learners to join the boarding section, imposing an extra financial burden on parents and guardians."

### MPs pledge to push govt to address concerns

A section of lawmakers reacted to the presentation by CSOs, expressing gratitude for the grounded research on education matters. Mr. Joseph Ssewungu pledged to task Ministry of Education officials for answers on the raised concerns.

In the same way, the committee Chairperson, Mr. James Kubeketerya, indicated that the major issues raised would be critical in guiding the committee to make logical recommendations in the final report, which would eventually be used to guide Parliament in making critical decisions for the Education sector in the 2025/26 National Budget.

"I would like to appreciate them for giving us very good submissions because those observations you have made are very spot on," Mr Kubeketerya said.

The above concerns will therefore be crucial in enabling the Parliament education committee in pressing government to ensure that major issues within the education are sufficiently addressed through provision of adequate funds.

The paper presented in parliament was generated through the combined efforts of OXFAM Uganda, RELI Uganda, USDC, Kukuza Education, ISER, War Child Canada, IIRR, and Save the Children Uganda