

CSOs Present Evidence on UGX13.3Billion Capitation Shortfall as the Education Sector remains underfunded



CSOs making contributions towards legislative discussions on the Ministerial Policy Statement FY 2026/27 at Parliament before the committee on Education and Sports on Wednesday, 1st April 2026. Photo (CSBAG)

CSOs under the umbrella of the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) warn that systemic failures in the Education sector, including inaccurate enrolment data, have left schools underfunded by more than UGX 13 billion and threaten to derail Uganda's socio-economic transformation agenda

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have laid bare systemic failures in Uganda's education sector, revealing that inaccurate enrolment data has left schools underfunded by more than **UGX 13 billion**. The revelations came as the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG), its members through a coalition of education-focused organisations, submitted their position paper on the FY2026/27 Ministerial Policy Statement to the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Sports.

While the government has increased the education budget to **UGX 5,749.21 billion** for the FY2026/27, Civil Society actors warned that persistent gaps in data integrity, infrastructure, staffing, and policy prioritisation continue to undermine the quality and equity of education.

The cornerstone of their concern is a finding by the Auditor General that 67,138 students across 687 sampled schools were enrolled and attending classes but were never captured in the Education Management Information System (EMIS). The omission resulted in a capitation funding shortfall of approximately **UGX 13.3 billion** for those schools, deepening financial stress in institutions already struggling to stay afloat.

During the engagement, Hon. James Kubeketerya, the Committee Chairperson and Member of Parliament for Bunya County, acknowledged the gravity of the findings but also asked the CSOs. "You bring us these reports—these very important reports—and we thank you. But let me ask you directly: do you actually visit the schools?" Kubeketerya posed to the coalition.

"Because when we, as a committee, go out on field visits to collect information on capitation grants, we often find headteachers who tell us everything is okay, they can verify their data. So if you are not on the ground, how do you validate what the Ministry is telling us?"

The question drew a sharp response from representatives of the coalition, who detailed their extensive monitoring work across districts. Led by the Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) and members of the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI)—including the Uganda Society for Disabled Children, Education Advocacy Network, War Child Canada, the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, and Kukuza Education—the civil society groups presented evidence of regular school-level assessments, community scorecards, and joint monitoring visits conducted in partnership with parent-teacher associations.

"Honourable Chair, we do visit schools. In fact, it is from those visits that we were able to corroborate the Auditor General's findings," a Musa Mugoya from ISER responded. "We have been to schools, and we have seen the registers with hundreds of learners whose names do not appear on the Ministry's capitation payment lists. Our call is that the government should institutionalise such verification so that funding follows the child."

Kubeketerya welcomed the clarification, noting that the committee would take the organisations up on their offer to share field visit reports. "If you are already doing that work, then we need to bridge the gap between your findings and what the Ministry presents.

The CSO submission also painted a picture of a sector whose infrastructure, staffing, and essential services are failing to keep pace with enrolment. Secondary school enrolment now stands at approximately **4.6 million** learners, yet physical inspections by the Auditor General across 157 local governments revealed widespread deficits. Hundreds of schools lack adequate classrooms, science laboratories, libraries, and safe sanitation facilities. In 252 schools, classrooms with cracked walls pose safety risks, while 233 schools still rely on condemned pit latrines.

Staffing gaps are equally severe. In 238 secondary schools, only 65 percent of teaching positions are filled, forcing schools to locally recruit **8,628 teachers** at a cost of **UGX 61.34 billion**—a burden that ultimately falls on schools and parents. Salary arrears in those institutions have reached **UGX 1.6 billion**, reflecting what the CSOs called a systemic shift of staffing costs from government to households.

Financial stress is further compounded by chronic underfunding of capitation grants. In sampled local governments, schools received UGX 26.65 billion less than their enrolment-based entitlement. As a result, payables in 255 secondary schools grew from UGX 35.63 billion to UGX 36.78 billion between 2023 and 2024, signalling that institutions are sinking deeper into debt even as new funds are allocated.

The CSOs also drew attention to what they termed "policy silence" on school feeding, noting that the Ministerial Policy Statement makes no mention of meals as a core component of education service delivery. Data from the National Planning Authority shows that only **34.2%** of school-going children receive meals at school, a figure that drops further in rural areas where the majority of learners are based.

"Hunger remains a significant barrier to learning," the position paper states, citing global evidence that up to **60%** of learners from low-income households attend school hungry, affecting concentration, attendance, and academic performance.

Similarly, despite the government's development of Menstrual Health Management guidelines in 2023, implementation remains weak. The Auditor General notes that **64%** of schoolgirls regularly miss classes due to inadequate sanitary materials and poor sanitation facilities—a reality that undermines girls' retention and contributes to gender disparities in education outcomes.

The coalition, which includes Oxfam Uganda, World Vision Uganda, and the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group as the coordinating steward, called on the Ministry of Education and Sports to strengthen EMIS data verification, align capitation grants with validated enrolment figures, and enforce accountability measures for school administrators and local governments.

They further urged the government to fast-track the National School Feeding Policy, ring-fence financing for menstrual hygiene, and close staffing gaps through targeted recruitment and the absorption of qualified locally recruited teachers into the formal payroll.