

**A**s we enter another election season, Ugandans deserve a clear and honest account of how far we have come as a country – especially in human development.

Education remains at the centre of the National Resistance Movement's (NRM) transformation agenda. When the NRM Government came to power in 1986, Uganda's education system was in deep decline: access was limited, facilities were dilapidated, and education was a privilege of the few who could afford it.

Today, nearly four decades later, Uganda has made a profound leap forward. Through intentional investments and pro-people policies, the NRM has expanded access, improved quality, and opened pathways for millions of children and youth to realise their potential.

These are the gains we must protect and consolidate under President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

#### **UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION: OPENING DOOR FOR EVERY CHILD**

In 1997, Uganda made history by introducing Universal Primary Education (UPE) – a bold intervention that ended the exclusion of children whose families could not afford school fees. The impact has been transformational:

- Enrolment increased from 2.5 million learners in 1997 to 9.52 million by 2025
- The number of government-aided primary schools grew from 6,880 in 1997 to 12,549 by 2025
- Today, 6,429 out of 10,584 parishes have at least one government-aided primary school, though the total number is 12,549
- Over the last five years alone, the Government has built 2,228 new classrooms, renovated 794, provided 21,004 learner desks, and constructed 239 teachers' houses

To ensure quality, the Government has recruited more teachers – now

# Protecting the gains: How President Museveni and NRM have transformed education sector

147,176 teachers compared to 84,825 in 1997 – and lowered the pupil-teacher ratio from 65:1 with a target of 53:1 in the next term.

The Government has distributed 2.45 million textbooks and corresponding teachers' guides to improve learning outcomes. These efforts have pushed Uganda's national literacy rate to 74% (2024) up from 43% in 1986.

**Universal Secondary Education:** Breaking the cycle of dropouts.

In 2007, the NRM Government introduced Universal Secondary Education (USE) – the first of its kind in Africa. This was followed in 2012 by the Universal Post O-level Education and Training programme.

As a result:

- Enrolment in government-aided secondary schools increased from 412,367 in 2006 to 1.14 million by 2025
- The number of secondary schools rose to 1,594 by 2025, including 189 new seed schools built recently
- An additional 258 seed schools are under construction
- A total of 1,147 sub-counties and town councils now have at least one government-aided secondary school.

The Government has invested in teacher recruitment, raising the number of secondary teachers from 29,713 in 2007 to 37,486 by 2025.

The Government also enhanced the pay for science teachers by over 300% and strengthened the teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines.

#### **HIGHER EDUCATION: EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY FOR NEXT GENERATION**

When the NRM came to power, Uganda had only one university –



Makerere University. Today, the country boasts 78 universities, 10 of which are public. Total enrolment currently stands at 220,800 learners.

To support bright students from poor backgrounds, the Government introduced the Students' Loan Scheme (2014), through which 16,436 students have benefitted so far. NRM continues to sponsor 4,000 students annually in public universities, while infrastructural upgrades are ongoing.

The NRM also established the National Institute for Teacher Education to raise the professional standards of primary school teachers, with enrolment currently at 1,000 student teachers.

Technical and Vocational Training (TVET): Skilling for jobs and wealth creation.

President Museveni's vision for a skills-based economy is being realised through massive investment in technical and vocational education.

#### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

- Construction of 21 new TVET institutions in the past five years, bringing the national total to 189 institutes
- Currently, 130 out of 353 constituencies have a TVET school
- Total enrolment in TVET institutions stands at 22,763 students
- Six TVET colleges have been upgraded to centres of excellence
- Establishment of TVET councils to standardise practical skills training

#### **PRESIDENTIAL SKILLING HUBS**

To tackle unemployment among the youth who missed formal schooling:

- A total of 82,790 youth have been trained in carpentry, welding, mechanics, hairdressing, baking and more
- A total of 66,631 trainees are from Kampala
- The number of skilling hubs has expanded to 28 countrywide

Additionally, 338,559 artisans have been formally assessed and certified to enhance their employability and earnings.

#### **SPECIAL NEEDS, INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

The NRM has demonstrated commitment to equity by investing in schools that support children with disabilities, furnishing them with facilities for skills training in carpentry, mechanics, welding and more.

#### **DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION**

To improve efficiency, accountability and learning outcomes, the Government has undertaken major digital reforms:

- Digitisation of the national school register and school inspection systems
- Provision of ICT laboratories in all newly constructed seed schools
- Launch of the Teacher Effectiveness and Learner Achievement system
- Distribution of 14,000 smartphones to government schools to monitor teacher presence and learner attendance

As a result of these reforms, teacher attendance has improved from 27% to 80% and school inspection coverage has risen to 86% nationwide.

The story of Uganda's education sector under President Museveni and the NRM is a story of deliberate investment, visionary leadership, and unwavering commitment to social justice.

We have moved from scarcity to expansion, from exclusion to inclusion, and from underdeveloped systems to improving quality across the board.

#### **PROMISES IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR**

The NRM commits to strengthening education at all levels through:

- Continue providing free education under UPE, USE and Universal Post O-level Education and Training
- Recruit more primary and secondary school teachers to stop illegal fees and improve the teacher-pupil ratio
- Rehabilitate existing primary schools and expand grant-aiding
- Construct new seed secondary schools and upgrade schools that fall below standards
- Rehabilitate all 121 traditional secondary schools and special needs schools
- Construct staff houses for teachers, among others

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