

Teachers' absenteeism in Kumi blamed for poor performance

KUMI

By Godfrey Ojore

Kumi district is facing a deepening education crisis following a new report showing that most Primary Three pupils cannot complete work intended for Primary Two learners.

The education assessment, conducted by UWEZO in August, last year, across 15 government-aided schools, focused on basic literacy and numeracy and revealed a sharp deterioration in learning outcomes.

According to the report, many children are failing to progress academically despite Uganda's automatic promotion policy. Shockingly, 14% of learners in Kumi district do not advance to the next grade, increasing fears of high dropout rates before completing the primary cycle.

SURVEY FINDINGS

One of the most alarming findings is widespread teacher absenteeism. At the time of the survey, 20% of teachers were absent, despite the district having 75 schools and 1,157 teachers on its payroll.

Simon Peter Olinga, the

national trainer at UWEZO, said the crisis is rooted in inadequate infrastructure and overwhelming teacher workloads.

"We found that lack of enough classrooms and an extremely high teacher-pupil ratio are major contributors to the learning crisis. The Government needs to intervene urgently," Olinga said.

The assessment reported a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:93, almost double the national policy requirement of one teacher for every 53 learners. Some schools have reached alarming levels of classroom

BETWEEN THE LINES

District leaders called for strict accountability to be enforced. Teachers who dodge lessons should compensate within the same week.

congestion. Representing the district education officer, Kesiron Okia confirmed the findings and said overcrowding has crippled effective learning.

"Some classes have over 200 learners. Under such conditions, a teacher can't give every child the attention they

need," Okia said.

He also pointed to chronic pupil absenteeism, especially in communities near weekly markets or in farming areas.

HEADTEACHERS' VIEWS

Headteachers said parental neglect continues to undermine learning efforts. Charles Ebwokor, the headteacher of Kumi Primary School, noted the lack of school meals as a key cause of poor performance.

Without urgent action, stakeholders warn Kumi district risks raising a generation unable to meet basic education standards.