

## ■ EDITORIAL

# A generation starving for more than knowledge

The Government's Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme has expanded access to millions, but a disheartening truth persists: 7,469 schools produced no division one graduates in the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations, which is a sharp rise from 6,833 in 2023.

However, behind this revelation lies a failure by parents who send children to school without meals, leaving them to endure 10-hour school days on empty stomachs, yet no one can concentrate in class without eating. This neglect directly curtails learning: Hunger-stricken pupils consistently score below the Uganda National Examinations

Board's average pass marks, proving that malnutrition cripples academic potential.

Stunted children are by far more likely to repeat grades or drop out entirely, perpetuating cycles of poverty.

Well, parents who dismiss this duty have taken Matthew 4:4:

Man does not live by bread alone, literally and too far, ignoring that a starving mind

cannot absorb

knowledge. How

can a child solve equations when their

body is in survival mode?

School feeding programmes in Karamoja region show

great improvements in attendance

and performance, yet parents refuse even

minimal contributions while blaming teachers for overcrowded classrooms.

The Government's upcoming National School Feeding Programme (2026) is a key step, but it cannot absolve parents of their primary duty.

Free education was never meant to and can never replace parental responsibility. It is supposed to complement it. Local governments must launch sensitisation campaigns to correct misinterpretations of UPE and enforce accountability. They should punish non-compliant parents.



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