

# The science seeds have germinated, but gaps remain

**THE** recently released Senior Six results showed a significant improvement in the performance of mathematics, chemistry and agriculture. The other subject where students scored highly is biology.

These are key subjects which drive the much-needed science and technology journey the country badly needs to anchor social-economic development.

On top of the noticeable improvement in the performance of science subjects, results also indicate that 98.9% candidates qualified for a certificate. Under the current regulations, a candidate requires a subsidiary level pass in a principal level subject as a minimum requirement to qualify for university admission. Going by this, Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) officials said 13,291 (68.6%) qualify. For technical and vocational education where one principal and two subsidiary pass levels are considered, 145,129 (87.9%) candidates qualify. The option of technical and vocational education is the other timely call that students must embrace with open hands.



## EDITORIAL

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This is the call that the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Museveni, amplified in her message to Senior Six candidates, saying the country has sufficient places in technical and vocational tertiary institutions, both public and private, to absorb these learners. In developed countries, technical institutions are the bedrock of industrial development. So, for Uganda, various incentives have been deliberately drafted into the education process to entice

learners into the science world.

On top of making science subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics compulsory, the Government enhanced salaries of science teachers. Local innovators in science and technology have also been given frontbench support to motivate them.

Yet, there are some visible gaps. The results show that there was a noticeable drop in the performance of two key science and innovation subjects: physics and entrepreneurship.

In the humanities, UNEB officials said, the problems continue to be poor interpretation of questions due to misunderstanding of the key concepts that determine the expected responses.

However, for key subjects such as physics, officials and teachers point at limited laboratory services within schools across the country. For instance, the latest Auditor General's report shows that 136 government secondary schools have no science laboratories, while 182 schools do not have libraries.

It is, therefore, urgent that these gaps are addressed.