



**INITIATIVE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS**

## **Factors contributing to poor performance in Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) in Goma Division, Mukono Municipal Council**



### **Education *Baraza* Report May 31, 2018**



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## **A. Introduction**

The Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) organized an Education Baraza (community dialogue) on May 31, 2018 at Bukerere grounds in Bukerere village, Goma Division, Mukono Municipal, Mukono District. Although Mukono Municipal Council is one of the best performing in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) in the country, Goma Division with the highest concentration of Universal Primary Education schools registers the poorest performance in PLE in the Municipal Council compared to Central Divisions.

The *Baraza* was attended by Ms. Margret Nakitto, Municipal Education Officer, Ms. Bulya Olivia, Municipal Inspector of Schools, Mr. Elisa Mukasa Nkoyoyo, LC III chairperson, Goma Division chairperson, Parish councilors, head teachers and teachers of schools and a number of community members.

ISER was represented by Joshua Kisawuzi- Community Outreach Officer, Musa Mugoya- Program Officer and Doreen Nabwato Grace- an intern from Makerere University School of Law – all from the Right to Education Program. Mr. Kasalirwe David, ISER Community Health Advocate (CHA) helped with moderating of the meeting.

The major aim of the Education *Baraza* was to bridge the communication gap between the community members of Goma Division and the district leadership on factors leading to poor performance in PLE in the Division.

## **B. Issues raised by the community members**

### **Insufficient monitoring and inspection of schools.**

The community members complained of the inadequate inspection and supervision of schools by the municipal school inspectors. Some of them reported that the inspector of school put more efforts on supervising private school as compared to public and government aided schools. They also further noted that school inspection gives more attention to infrastructural standards rather than academic efficiency. As a result, the syllabus is not effectively taught or adhered to as some teachers do not prepare lesson plans and scheme work. This has resulted in inadequate knowledge transfer to pupils that is resulting into poor performance in PLE.

### **High school fees charges**

The participants also pointed out that enrolling their children in the schools in the area is expensive to the extent that most of them not affordable – this is both in government aided and public schools as well as private. They highlighted that a part from the high school fees, they are also required to pay for other non-tuition like building fees, lunch, sports, ream of papers and provide pupils with many books which they are suspicious are not even used. This has forced some pupils to stay away from schools as their parents look for the school fees – such pupils' learning is affected due to irregular attendance of class yet they are unable to catch up with their colleagues which eventually results into attaining of poor grades in PLE.

### **The poor remuneration of teachers.**

The community decried the poor working conditions in terms of low pay and lack of accommodation that the teachers are operating in amidst the rising high cost of living in an urban area. This negatively affects the teachers' morale and leads to their low output that consequently leads to poor performance of pupils IN PLE.

### **Limited staff and infrastructure**

There is high enrolment in schools especially in public and government schools amidst the inadequate staff which hinder teachers from according all pupils the necessary support and attention. In addition to limited classrooms to accommodate the big number of pupils. The congestion in classrooms coupled with the limited staff affects pupils' concentration and learning which has a direct negative effect on the pupils' performance.

### **Untimely disbursement of UPE funds**

The community members, head teachers and teachers also reported that the delayed release of UPE capitation grants affects the smooth operations of schools. Despite the untimely disbursement of funds, the monies being released to schools are also inadequate which affects the schools' activities like procurement of teaching requirements. This leaves teachers with no necessities like books to do scheme work, markers and chalk among others to facilitate the teaching of pupils. This forces teachers to resolve to substandard methods of teaching pupils which are incapable of making pupils understand and appreciate the various subjects which result into poor performance.

### **Mushrooming unlicensed schools.**

The Municipal Principal Inspector of Schools also pointed out the mushrooming unlicensed private schools that are short of basic requirements and necessities as one of the leading cause to poor performance in PLE. These schools operate in unfavorable environment with shanty structures and recruit unqualified staff to teach pupils. With the substandard education delivered by unqualified teachers, pupils in such schools are not suitable to sit for national examinations and pass – hence they end up performing poorly.

### **Thematic curriculum**

The participants also noted that teaching pupils in the local language (Luganda) in lower classes (primary one – three) is contributing to their poor performance at the end of the primary cycle. This affect the pupils' transition to upper classes where they are taught in English not the local language. As a result pupils are unable to properly understand the content taught in upper primary (which is purely taught in English) which result into poor performance when subject to assessment especially at PLE.

### **Limited parental support of their children's education.**

The community members and the head teachers present also faulted the poor performance of pupils on reluctance of some parents to support their children with the school basic necessities such as scholastic materials, uniform and food. The lack of basic requirements by pupils affect their concentration and participation in class hence contributing to poor performance of pupils in examinations.

### **C. Responses by the Municipal Council Officials.**

The Principal Inspector of Schools Ms. Bulya Olivia of Mukono Municipal explained that much as the Municipal Council has the will to increase the number of teachers and also enhance their salaries, they are limited in capacity and this can only be handled by both the ministry and parliament. She therefore urged teachers to continue working with the available salary as proposals for increments are processed.

She also explained that parents with children in schools implementing the Universal Primary Education Program are not required to pay the exorbitant fees. However, she advised them to fully involve themselves in the management of these schools through Parent-Teacher Associations and School Management Committees to be able to influence school management decisions that affect their children's learning.

The inspector also informed the community *baraza* that it is a government policy to teach pupils in lower primary in the local language. And this was informed by research that when children are taught in the local language they tend to understand easily at a young age as opposed to a foreign language like English.

The inspector of schools also noted that they do their best to monitor and inspect schools in the entire municipal council. However, there are few in number coupled with absence of effective transport means and yet the schools are very many and therefore they unable to monitor all the schools in the municipal. She also added that the allegations that they pay more attention to private schools and pay less attention to public and government aided schools is not true but simply because they close private schools that operate without meeting basic requirements and minimum standards which attracts media attention, the community thinks they are concentrating on private schools.

In relation to the above, the inspector also urged parents to take due diligence and ensure that the private schools in which they enroll their children are licensed and also appealed to all private proprietors of schools to ensure that their schools meet the required basic standards to avoid closure.

The LCIII chairperson also informed the community that they have planned to provide desks to three schools implementing the UPE program in the area as a way of improving the state of infrastructure in schools.

#### **D. Recommendations**

The Municipal inspector of schools committed to strengthen its monitoring and inspection directorate to effectively enforce compliance to basic standards and minimum standards especially in private schools.

Parents and the community were also implored to take an active role in the management of schools to avoid issues of the schools management committees making resolutions without their input.

The school management committee were also urged to improve on their supervision and monitoring of schools to ensure that schools are accessible to all children especially those from poor backgrounds.

#### **E. Conclusion**

The LC III Chairperson extended his appreciation to ISER for organizing the *Baraza* and for specifically choosing Goma Division. He pleaded with ISER to come again since ISER's services are in high demand in the area. He also expressed his gratitude to the community members for honoring the invitation in large numbers and for being active during the event. In the same vein, the Principal Inspector of schools also pointed out that the goal of such meetings is to acknowledge the challenges being faced and as such come up with solutions as a community and government. She further stated that as the technical leadership of education in the Municipal Council, they are committed to improving the state of education service delivery in Mukono Municipality.