

Uganda, Kampala, 13 April 2011 — The government free education programmes for primary and secondary schools are facing a crisis resulting from a Shs67 billion budget shortfall which government has failed to provide for in the next financial year. The deficit is highlighted in the government budget proposals for the financial year 2011/2012.

According to a national budget framework paper for the coming financial year now before the Social Services Committee of Parliament, it was observed yesterday that the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme is facing a shortfall of Shs10 billion.

The shortfall will affect about eight million pupils in primary while the Shs57 billion for Universal Secondary Education (USE) would affect about 1.5 million students. The figures are contained in the ministry's national budget framework paper.

The legislators have, however, summoned the education minister, Ms Namirembe Bitamazire, to appear before MPs next week to explain the shortfall which they said is likely to affect next term's school curriculum.

"We are inviting the education minister to appear with her team next week to answer some of the questions regarding the budget allocations to UPE and USE inclusive," said the committee chairperson, Mr Brian Asiimwe (Ntoroko).

UPE started in 1996 and the government pays the school fees for the children. It also provides grants to be spent on instructional materials, co-curricular activities like sport, and the management and maintenance of utilities like water and electricity. The same modus operandi applies to USE. Minister Bitamazire told Daily Monitor yesterday that they are trying to harmonise the Ministry's budget to ensure that the programmes are not affected.

The Education Ministry last financial year received Shs1.2 trillion and the allocation has been maintained this financial year. The programmes, however, continue to face criticisms especially in regard to the quality of the education being offered. Critics argue that the programme was implemented without due consideration and planning hence leading to a high school dropout rate.

According to UNESCO's annual Education for All Global Monitoring report for 2008, only about 49 per cent of pupils enrolled in UPE complete primary education. President Museveni during last year's presidential campaigns also announced a free education provision for A-Level, beginning next financial year.

Source: [allAfrica](#)

