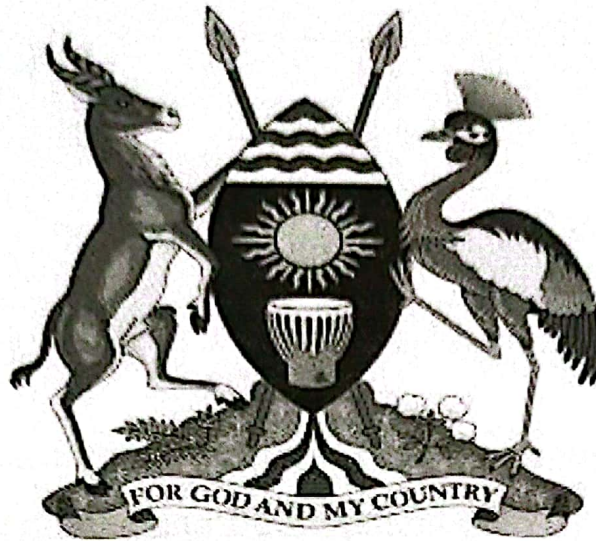


PRESS RELEASE



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

THE 4TH TEACHER EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

21st – 22nd APRIL 2022

THEME: "COPING WITH COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE EDUCATION SECTOR: THE TEACHERS' ROLE."

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) through the department of Teacher Education Training and Development (TETD) has so far successfully held three symposia on Teacher Education. The symposia have accorded the sub-sector an opportunity to reflect on the past, interrogate the present and look into the future of teacher education in Uganda. Through the symposia TETD has also got insights into good teacher education practices both at the local and international level.

1.1 The first Teacher Education Symposium

The first symposium was held in December, 2018 under the theme "***Striving for efficiency and effectiveness in teacher education in Uganda***". The sub themes included; Teacher training, Development and Support; Teacher professionalism and performance standards; and Teacher Management, Leadership and Accountability.

The symposium attracted participants from within and outside the country including Political leaders, Education Development Partners, Technical staff of the Ministry of Education and Sports and Local governments and Education services providers in the private sector.

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The symposium generated a number of critical issues such as;

- i. Need to review the teacher education curricula.
- ii. Enhance professionalism in teacher training to produce professionally competent and motivated teachers.
- iii. Improve the training environment for teachers.
- iv. Initiate a policy shift to have demonstration schools for all teacher training institutions.
- v. Implement the CPD framework and have teachers renew their licenses every after five years.
- vi. Fill the staffing gaps in teacher training institutions.
- vii. Integrate ICT in teacher training and strengthen on-line teacher registration.

The participants recommended to have a teacher education symposium as an annual event and agreed to reflect on the National Teacher Policy which was still in the development process at the time.

In the year 2019, the TIET department with support from various stakeholders managed to address some of the issues that emerged from the symposium. They included the following among others;

- i) The National Teacher policy was launched to address a number of issues concerning teacher education, development and management.
- ii) On-line teacher registration was fully implemented.
- iii) Some infrastructure in 15 teacher training institutions were renovated and construction of new structures began.
- iv) Filling of staffing gaps in teacher training institutions was partially addressed.

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1.2 The second Teacher Education Symposium

It was held in the month of February 2020 due to unforeseen challenges, under the theme "*Quality teachers for the 21st Century*". The function attracted more than 500 participants and was honored by the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports as the chief guest.

It provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on what had transpired in teacher education since the first symposium.

As actions taken for implementation of the recommendations, with support from the MoES and Education Development Partners such as UNESCO, UNICEF, ENABEL, LUIGI, Kyambogo University a number of issues have been addressed despite the Covid-19 pandemic. They include;

- i. Country-wide dissemination of the National Teacher Policy
- ii. The launch of a task force for the establishment of the Uganda National Institute of Teacher Education (UNITE) together with its secretariat.
- iii. Identification of a College for transformation into the UNITE.
- iv. Initiation and completion of a baseline survey for the implementation of the NTP.
- v. Evaluation of the performance of the Teacher education curriculum.
- vi. Development of a 10-year TIET (now TETD) department strategic plan.
- vii. Renovation and construction of new infrastructure in the 5 National Teachers' colleges.
- viii. Training of Lectures and Tutors of TIET institutions in ICT.
- ix. Initiation and implementation of CPD meeting for Administrators of TIET institutions.

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- x. Recruitment of more personnel for TIET institutions to address the staffing gap.
- xi. Completion of a need's assessment on the development of guidelines on leadership, governance and management in Teacher Training.

1.3 The third Teacher Education Symposium

The third teachers' symposium was held under the theme: "*A digitally competent teaching force for the 21st century*" and was intended to review the achievements as a result of the past symposia challenges and discussing the different viable ICT education applications/platforms. Participants shared experiences on building an affordable and reliable ICT system as well as experiences of parents' philosophy on the use of ICT in learning. They also share lessons on digitized home schooling and show cased current ICT projects, developments and innovations in teaching and learning.

2.0 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the education sector

For almost two years now, the world has been hit by the deadly COVID-19 pandemic leading to closure of education institutions hence affecting learning. This has had a lot of negative impact such as early pregnancies, forced marriages, loss of employment, and so on especially in the developing world. With over 15 million children out of school as a result of COVID-19, a sustainable solution, that provides children with the necessary environment for healthy development, is needed.

In order to ensure continuity of learning there has been global effort to transform the mode of education service delivery to include use of ICT.

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This requires ICT infrastructure, equipment and knowledge, which has not been readily available in the education institution. The education sector must continue to look for solutions that enables coping with the situation.

3.0 The fourth Teacher Education Symposium

As a developing country, Uganda requires a strategy that addresses the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. Uganda first closed all schools on 20th March, 2020 following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic with an aim of mitigating the spread of the Corona virus. This affected at the pre-primary school level approximately 608,973 learners, 8,600,000 at the primary school level, 1,400,000 at the secondary school level, 95,841 in TVET and 291,931 at the tertiary and university level (according to EMIS, 2017). Later in October 2020 the lockdown was lifted for some classes in a phased manner. However, before all classes could report back to school another lockdown was announced on Friday 18th June, 2021 and as a result, learners in the Pre-primary and P.1 - P.3 classes have never stepped in class since March, 2020.

Against this background MoES, through TETD department is organizing the fourth Teacher Education Symposium under the theme *"Coping with the Impact of Covid-19 In the Education Sector: The Teachers' Role."* The symposium is planned from Thursday, 21st - Friday, 22nd April, 2022 and will be held following the Ministry of Health Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

3.1 The Purpose of the fourth Teacher Education Symposium

To provide a platform for teacher educators and stakeholders to share the role of the teacher in coping with the impact of Covid-19 in the education sector

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3.2 Objectives of the symposium

- i. Assess the implementation status of the recommendations from earlier symposia
- ii. Discuss the role of the teacher in coping with the impact of Covid-19 in the education sector
- iii. Share experiences on applying affordable and reliable ICT systems to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in teaching and learning
- iv. Show case the innovations of blended learning at different education levels.
- v. Share experiences on teacher led interventions to mitigate the impact of Covid 19 on education.

3.3 Sub themes

In order to make the symposium interactive and motivating papers for presentation will be based on the sub themes below:

- i. Innovations and best practices as a result of earlier symposia themes
- ii. The role of the teacher in coping with the impact of Covid-19 in the education sector
- iii. Applying affordable and reliable ICT systems to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 in teaching and learning
- iv. Innovations of blended learning at different education levels.

Each major session will be preceded by a key note address by a renowned teacher education personality to focus the discussion.

3.4 Participants' Profiles

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The symposium is meant for a variety of teacher education stakeholders including those from government and the private sector; local and the international community. Due to COVID-19 pandemic:

- i. physical participation will be at most 200 participants
- ii. unlimited online participants
- iii. 50 service providers in the categories of drivers, exhibitors, rapporteurs, digital experts, body guards of VIPs, etc.

Participants will be Teacher Educators from teacher training institutions, TVET institutions, staff at of MoES, university Lecturers, Education Development Partners, Political Leaders, ICT experts, Representatives of civil society organizations and Religious Leaders. All those to participate physically will be required to register with the TETD department hence need for a hybrid conference.

3.5 Appreciation to sponsors of the event

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K. Sawang,
20/4/2022