



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

STATEMENT BY

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION

**ON INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH
CONTAINED IN THE EDUCATION CURRICULUM**

Rt. Hon Speaker and Hon Members

Hon. Akello Lucy raised, on the floor of Parliament, an issue concerning content of integrated science, Primary Six materials published by; Longhorn Publishers (on pages 214 – 218), MK publishers (on pages 197-201) and Fountain Publishers (on pages 191-192). The same concern was again presented on the floor of Parliament on 2nd February 2022. The content in question is on the inclusion of methods of family planning, myths and misconceptions about family planning. This content is covered under the topic 'Reproductive System'.

This topic, which is found in the P6 curriculum, is aimed at creating awareness among the learners, on the reproductive system. There has been an increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, child molestation and rape and the effects of HIV/AIDS pandemic which has made it important for the learners to be empowered in the area of reproductive health, so as to help them understand the developments in their bodies and the consequences.

The P6 Integrated Science curriculum

The general aim of the curriculum at this level is to provide learners with knowledge to prepare them to be responsible citizens. The learning outcome for the topic on reproductive system, is for the learner to develop further knowledge about his/her reproductive system; acquire scientific knowledge and life skills for improving and maintaining the efficiency of his/her reproductive system.

Rt. Hon Speaker & Hon Members of Parliament

The curriculum was developed basing on Bloom's taxonomy (1956) which categorizes knowledge into 6 levels of demand namely; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation.

Moshi

According to Bloom, the learning outcome in question requires learners to get basic knowledge and comprehend/understand it for creating awareness and for purposes of applying the knowledge to safeguard themselves in society.

The subject competences as presented in the curriculum read as follows:

The learner:

- Describes growth and development in human beings
- Identifies primary and secondary sex characteristics.
- Describes social and emotional changes.
- Describes reproductive organs and cells in human males and females.
- Discusses the processes of fertilisation, conception and pregnancy in humans.
- Prepares effective messages on reproductive health.
- Mentions problems in pregnancy.
- Discusses consequences of teenage pregnancy.
- Demonstrates proper ways of caring for reproductive organs.
- Identifies diseases and disorders of the system.
- Describes the importance of family planning, uses, methods and family spacing.
- Discusses myths and misconceptions about family planning.
- Draws the reproductive organs.

An analysis of the above verbs used in the subject competences, as derived from Bloom's Taxonomy, it can be noted that they are limited to knowledge and application so as to keep the content appropriate for the end consumer who is the learner.

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Rt. Hon Speaker & Hon MPs

Why the content on family planning is on the P.6 curriculum

(a) Understanding and caring for their body changes during puberty

Learners in P.6 are at the onset of puberty which is characterized by changes in their body organs and hormones that come with psychological changes. Learners therefore need to understand these changes, accept them and gain skills of how to care for their bodies during and after puberty.

(b) Preventing teenage pregnancy

Uganda registers high rates of early onset of sex, and teenage pregnancy. According to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (2016), **10%** of women and **17%** of men had sexual intercourse by the age 15; **1.2 %** of women gave birth before age 15. This renders inclusion of reproductive health education in the curriculum necessary to create awareness in the children since the curriculum is meant to address societal issues.

(c) To provide knowledge to learners who may drop out of schools after Primary seven

Uganda has a low completion and transition rate. According to the UBOS statistical abstract (2018), **60%** of the pupils who join Primary one class sit P.7 (completion rate) and **60.6%** of these join Senior One class. This implies that of the **1,965,606** pupils who joined P.1 in 2017, about 1,179,363 will complete P.7, and of these, 714694 will progress for further secondary education. This means only **36.3%** of pupils who join P.1 class manage to join S.1, while the **63.3%** remain at primary level. Hence the need to give them critical knowledge about family planning.

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(d) Strengthening other government interventions in combating HIV/AIDS

The government of Uganda introduced the Presidential Initiative on AIDS Strategy for Communication to the Youth (PIASCY) which is introduced to the learners as early as P.3 and guides them on how to protect themselves against AIDS. This topic brings a curriculum perspective of this intervention and strengthens the learners understanding of the PIASCY messages.

THE EVALUATION OF LEARNERS' BOOKS

Learners' books which are procured by the MoES are developed by publishing companies following specifications developed by National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) as aligned to the designed curriculum. According to the textbook specifications used to develop these materials (2013), writers were expected to **use appropriate language or situations which are to the level of the learners in the material (clear and simple).**

The Instructional Materials Unit of the Ministry of Education and Sports coordinates the evaluation of these textbooks with support from NCDC who are the technical experts. At that time before the amendment of the NCDC Act, 2021, NCDC was not responsible for determining the final textbooks to be procured. The procurement process follows the PPDA act which considers both technical and financial evaluation.

There are other materials authored by individuals but are not subjected to the rigour of book evaluation. Such materials are supposed to be evaluated by NCDC before use by schools in Uganda. The Centre issues a certificate for any approved material that meets the set standards. It has been established that many authors claim that NCDC approved their materials without evidence of the approval certificate, which means they were not approved by NCDC.

Observations on the contentious materials

1. The curriculum does not provide for competences and concepts on sexual intercourse and bodies responsible for provision of family planning services in Uganda as it appears in the materials (*Longhorn – pg. 217*)
2. It is noted that the content in question is high pitched for the target learner and as such it is above the age levels of the learners (*MK - pg. 200-202; longhorn – pg.215-217*).

Rt. Hon. Speaker

As a way forward

- (i) The MoES has put in place a committee of experts to analyze the texts books and correlate with the curriculum including to all elementary levels.
- (ii) The report and recommendation from this committee will enable the MoES to act appropriately as well as issue a statement warning the public especially the schools and the parents against using materials that have not been evaluated by National Curriculum Development Centre.
- (iii) MoES will issue punitive measures against any person caught distributing or selling books that have not been evaluated by NCDC and will be reprimanded.
- (iv) The development of the Textbook policy will be expedited to streamline textbooks development and use in schools in Uganda.
- (v) The publishers will have to adhere to the processes and procedures of material evaluation to avoid exposing learners to materials that are not quality assured and not age appropriate.
- (vi) It is critical that book writers conform to the curriculum and the attendant book specifications given.

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Rt. Hon Speaker & Hon MPs

Conclusion

The MoES has acknowledged that the language used in the content in question is high pitched for the target learner and as such it is above the age levels of the learners. We have therefore put a committee in place to critically analyze the texts books and correlate with the curriculum. The MoES pledged to take action immediately after the report and recommendations of the committee. MoES will report back to this floor of the actions taken on this subject matter.

Meanwhile, NCDC is compiling a list of all materials that have been evaluated by NCDC and found fit for use in schools and this list will soon be published to caution the public against exploitation by authors and publishers whose materials have not been approved.

I beg to submit



Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu

MINISTER OF STATE FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION