How to improve SST performance in primary schools

The social studies (SST) subject in Uganda's primary schools aims to equip learners with knowledge, skills and values to understand their society, environment and global issues. It emphasises civic competence, environmental awareness and social cohesion.

SST is often taught alongside religious education as a way of imparting social values to learners. The subject fosters responsible citizenship, critical thinking and appreciation of cultural heritage.

According to the Uganda National Examinations Board's report on the 2025 Primary Leaving Examinations performance, SST was the worst performed subject with only 3.3% of the candidates passing with a distinction.

To improve performance in SST, teachers must realise that most topics in the subject require learner-centred methodologies of teaching. This helps a learner to personalise learning, increase engagement, develop critical thinking, build confidence and knowledge retention.

Teachers should adopt hands-on experiences that lead to deeper understanding and application of SST knowledge in real-life experiences.

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Assign projects that require learners to apply SST knowledge, like creating community development plans or conducting surveys.

Role-playing: Use simulations or role-plays to explore historical events, civic responsibilities, or economic concepts.

FIELD TRIPS AND GUEST SPEAKERS

Organise visits to local institutions, the environment or invite experts to share insights.

HEADTEACHER

MOSES ECWERUU

Encouraging critical thinking: Ask open-ended questions that prompt learners to analyse, evaluate and solve problems.

These approaches help learners see the practical value of SST and develop skills for life.

CHALLENGES FACED BY SST TEACHERS

Teaching SST requires adequate planning, resources commitment. However, the following may limit the teachers' potential to teach.

Teachers in Uganda face several challenges when implementing the SST curriculum. Some of these include:

Limited teacher training and professional development, where many lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement the competency-based curriculum. There's a shortage of relevant textbooks, teaching aids and other resources, especially in rural areas.

Large class sizes and heavy workload:

Teachers struggle to manage large classes and balance their workload, making it difficult to implement interactive and engaging teaching methods.

DIFFICULTY IN INTEGRATING SUBJECTS

SST is an integrated subject, and some teachers struggle to combine topics from different disciplines like history, geography and civic education.

SST requires teachers to have access to the latest information yet many cannot access it due limited access to the internet.

Some teachers also have a poor reading culture,where they do not have interest in researching, which affects their ability to stay updated on current affairs and teach effectively.

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