THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

UGANDA PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE TEACHERS UNION (UPSTU)

Happy 38th NRM LIBERATION DAY ANNIVERSARY



H.E. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,
President of Uganda



Hon. Janet K. Museveni,
Minister of Education and Sports



Aron Mugaiga,
Secretary General
Uganda Professional Science Teachers Union (UPSTU)

The Board of Trustees, National Executive Council, Management and Staff of Uganda Professional Science Teachers Union (UPSTU) Congratulate **H.E Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,** the President of the Republic of Uganda *and the NRM Government upon the* **38th NRM/NRA Liberation Day Anniversary 2024**
Long live H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
Long live Uganda

Vision

A responsive and supportive union in Uganda, actively pursuing diverse initiatives to uplift science teachers and advance science education for national development.

Mission

To provide essential representation, protect rights and constantly advocate for better working conditions and professionalism for science teachers.

Our Values

- Professionalism
- Equity
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Solidarity
- Patriotism

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UGANDA PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE TEACHERS UNION (UPSTU)

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

A Labour Union for All Science Teachers in Uganda

Q&A with Aron Mugaiga

Secretary General- Medalist/Patriot & Pan-Africanist



Q What inspired the formation/ establishment of this Union?

A The Uganda Professional Science Teachers Union was established in 2019 and was fully recognized by the government of Uganda on 19th October, 2021 under Article 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda which provides freedom of association. The right includes the freedom of any member of the public to form or join any group of people to conduct activities that are not in contravention with the law.

We were initially under one umbrella teachers' union however, we felt that our interests were not catered for. The formation of this union was inspired by the need to address the challenges faced by science teachers by advocating for their recognition as professional Scientists. We were intentional in tackling the issues leading to obscurity in terms of professional identity in the education sector. It should be noted that science teachers are the primary contributors when it comes

to training professionals such Engineers, Doctors, Agriculturalists, Biochemists, Software developers, Forensic technicians and Environmental scientists to mention but a few. Therefore, UPSTU is a responsive and supportive union actively involved in pursuing diverse initiatives to uplift science teachers and advance science education for national development through our clearly set objectives.

Q What is your mandate and how does an ordinary teacher benefit from the union?

A Our membership scope is limited to only scientists in the education sector including; teachers; science tutors in TTCs; science lecturers in NTCs; technical instructors in BTVET and technical institutions. UPSTU is a labour union and as such, our mandate stems from the universal jurisdiction of labour unions which include but not limited to the following; to collectively negotiate for better workers' welfare, including better pay, safer working conditions, and better benefits; to promote a congenial work environment between the employer and employee; to advocate for enhancement of standards in teaching of science which will ensure demonstration of high levels of professionalism and service; to provide the union members with basic education pertaining to their rights such as job security, protection from discrimination, access to health; to provide general advice, guidance, legal support or counsel to members.

Through this union we have been able to collectively negotiate from a position of strength, and government who is our chief employer through support and guidance from H.E the President of Uganda was able to effectively enhance our remunerations since July, 2022. Graduate teachers who previously earned a salary of UGX 1,200,000, now earn 4,000,000; the Grade-5(diploma holder) who preciously earned UGX 530,000 are currently paid UGX 2,200,000 per month.



The upscaling of remunerations has directly and positively impacted the livelihoods of the teachers and their household. The standards of living have greatly improved and many of our teachers are now able to invest in ventures they were unable to invest in before, creating an economic ripple effect in terms of new opportunities and thereby contributing to the general transformation of the national economy.

In addition, UPSTU formed a Sacco that is administered under the slogan 'Save together, Grow together'. The Sacco among other benefits provides financial literacy, empowers the members to grow their savings and provides low interest loan facilities to improve their incomes and livelihoods.

The union also provides legal advice and service to members especially those who experience challenges with their employers or the immediate supervisors. In case of arbitration or litigation we send a legal team to represent and offer any kind of support as the situation may dictate.

We have established branches in all regions and in the 15 sub-regions across the country where we continuously provide training sessions and capacity building for members especially those in

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leadership positions. We have conducted sensitization and created awareness among our members, integrating them with government development oriented programs to ensure that we are all part of the transformation journey.

I would like to emphasize that we are not just a labour union but, a service based member centric union focused on offering stellar service and creating the best experience to our members who have invested their trust in us and this makes us unique compared to other labour organizations.

Q You seem to receive more support from Government, what sets you apart from other non-science teachers?

A On this note I would like to thank H.E President Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni who has been visionary and outstanding in rendering support and leadership in promoting sciences as a top priority in Uganda's education sector. When one looks at the National Development plan (NDP) and Vision2040 one realizes that their success is hinged on science and technology and there is no way to achieve this than to empower professional science teachers.

If we are to realize economic transformation, science and technology must be embraced and that is what the President has always been advocating for. The nations that fronted a science based approach of conducting business were able to develop much faster than those that did otherwise. In order to have a population that is productive we are required to impart the right skills set and therefore we pledge to carry the mantle as key champions and enablers of a science competence based economy.

Q What is your take on the old and new curriculum?

A We cannot say the old curriculum was absolutely irrelevant even if we must change it. It had its highs and lows, amidst the challenges it still produced highly competent professionals. Nevertheless, the demands of today require a more practical based curriculum that offers an array of options as far as problem solving is concerned. The modern world requires learners to develop practical skills at an early stage.

Problems keep evolving by the day and this means that we must review our approach of solving them. Once you maintain a more theoretical curriculum you are bound to produce learned but unskilled individuals. Therefore, I call upon all the stakeholders especially in the education sector to embrace the new curriculum which I believe is transformational.



We must appreciate the Ministry of education and sports under the stewardship of the First Lady Hon. Min. Kataha Janet Museveni, for rolling out the new competence based curriculum. It's now three years since it was introduced and the impact is already vivid; learners are able to make products used in daily life; they are able to run projects and offer practical and relevant solutions so I must say we are moving in the right direction.



UPSTU Delegation on World Teachers Day Celebrations, Kololo, Kampala on 5th October, 2023

Q Challenges

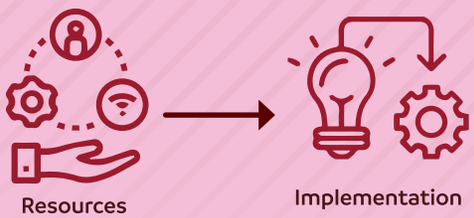
A The new curriculum requires a lot of resources to effectively implement. A lot of schools operate on meagre budgets which cannot cater for the necessary equipment and supplies therefore, we implore government to come in and offer support in order to achieve the intended objectives.

The first three years were dedicated to training teachers however, we still have a lot who have not yet undergone training. This means that in schools where teachers have not been trained, implementation of the new curriculum is likely not to be effective.

We request government together with National Curriculum Development Center to expedite the process of reskilling all our teachers and equip them with the necessary tools. As a Union we understand that Rome was not built in one day therefore, we do improvise where government resources are limited so that the learners may not miss the opportunity.

Q Where do you see UPSTU in the next five years?

A In order to make a future projection, we must acknowledge how far we have come. We used the first two years to establish structures right from the grass root and offices from regional to national level. With our branches across the country we have increased our footprint and now services are closer to the people. We are currently renting our premises however preparations of constructing the state of the art science and technology permanent head office complex, are in high gear.



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We see UPSTU as an organization to recon with, in the next five years. One that will be able to partner with government to promote quality science education that is transformative in nature.