NTCs should offer computer courses

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Students of Gulu College share a computer during a computer lesson. Most secondary schools lack well trained teachers for computer studies. PHOTO BY STEPHEN OKELLO

In Summary

There is a growing concern that National Teachers Colleges do not teach computer yet secondary schools need teachers for computer.

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By STEPHEN OKELLO

Despite computer being one of the subjects taught in schools today, several National Teacher's College (NTCs) across the country do not conduct these courses for their students. As such several stakeholders in the education sector have called on the Education ministry to consider having in place computer courses to produce teachers who can impart computer education to the learners.

Last year, National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), recommended that computer studies must be taught at both O and A-Level.

In fact Denis Tabo, a former student of Gulu Central High School told Daily Monitor that limited access to computer labs, and lack of computer books was the reason why students performed dismally in computer exams in the 2018-2019 national exams.

"We used to access computer lab twice a week for only 80 minutes a day which is not enough for a student to practice,'' he said.
He also cited lack of computer books that has made most of the students fail the theory part of the computer exams due to limited books in various schools. But Michael Okidi, the head teacher Layibi High School, advised schools to take up computer lessons when they already have in place enough computers and well-trained computer teachers.

"Lack of professional teachers is forcing us to hire anybody with a Bachelors in Computer Science some of whom are not equipped with the right knowledge of teaching students," he said. Charles Nyakito, the principal Unyama NTC, said computer studies are not yet in their curriculum. "We have been advocating for Kyambogo University to substitute Typewriting course with computer studies but we are not yet successful," Nyakito said.
"Currently, only Business Education students at Unyama NTC are taught computer, which is a small group," he adds.

Decrying the status quo, Ronald Lukyamuzi, the vice chairman Information and Communication Technology Teachers Association of Uganda, said most of the members of the association are not professional teachers but university ICT and Computer Science graduates.
"Government should also equip all the schools teaching computer studies with computers. Most schools have only about five computers which are shared by 60 students and no projector to support teachers in class," he said.
Computer studies were included in secondary school syllabus to encourage practical work and skills to allow students to accommodate the changing technologies in ICT.

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