

Nodding syndrome survivors want skills

OMORO

By Arnest Tumwesige

Survivors of the nodding disease syndrome, especially girls, are struggling to reintegrate into society due to lack of the skills to start income-generating activities or attain gainful employment.

Since 2012, when the first nodding syndrome cases were recorded in Omoro district, of the 289 confirmed cases, only four have fully recovered to the level of joining vocational schools or carrying out any productive activity.

Last year, the district, with support from the Office of the Prime Minister, donated eight sewing machines to the victims who have recovered to help them earn a living.

Four machines were donated to four girls who had undergone vocational training while the rest remained at Hope for Human Rehabilitation Centre in Odek sub-county.

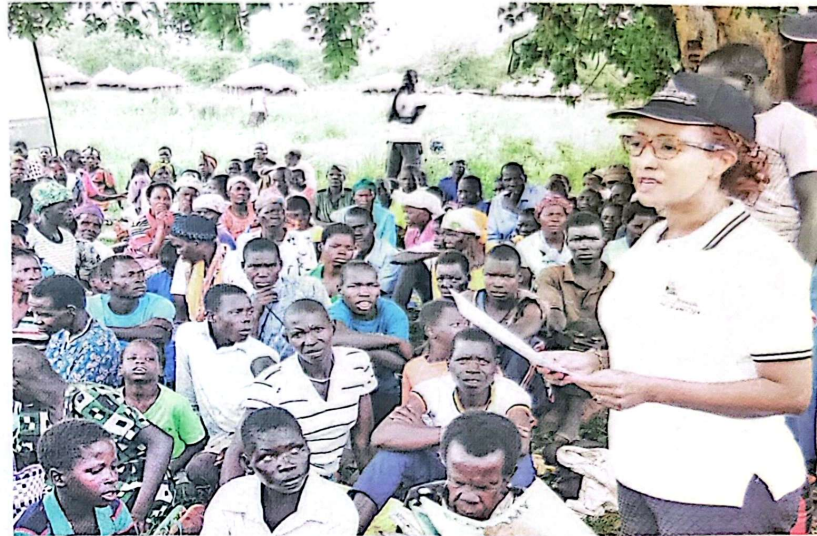
Among the lucky girls is Sarah Atim, 19, from Akoyo village, Awere sub-county in Pader district. She said she has not received sufficient training to help her efficiently operate the sewing machine.

"Some of our customers want modern intricate designs which I cannot handle," Atim added.

She noted that the number of her customers had reduced, making it hard for her to maintain the machine which is currently broken down.

Equally, Jennifer Amolo from Aromo-wagilobo parish, Odek sub-county, advocated for more training so that they can be able to sew different designs.

Amolo said: "The training we got was inadequate. This has



South African Airways' Yogi Biriggwa speaking to the affected families of Odek sub-county before distributing the food supplements. Photo by Arnest Tumwesige

rendered us unable to attend to the different needs of our clients given the changing trends in the market."

All the machines that were donated to the beneficiaries in April 2017 broke down after two months.

Omoro chairperson reacts

Douglas Peter Okello, the district chairperson, acknowledged the problem and said the district will allocate more funds to skill all the survivors that have fully recovered.

Okello, however, said despite Parliament approving a supplementary budget in which Omoro is supposed to receive over sh280m before the end of

the financial year, the funds have not yet been released by the finance ministry.

The chairperson also observed that while the district received a circular from Ministry of Health indicating that Omoro would get sh700m this financial year, the figures sent by the finance ministry do reflect the allocation.

"If we are going to address issues of nodding syndrome, we must have a co-ordinated approach," Okello said.

Partners remain hopeful

Yogi Biriggwa, the country manager South African Airways in Uganda, said nodding syndrome can be cured if the affected children are put on the

right nutrition and medication.

Biriggwa, who was leading a team from South African Airways, handed over 10,000kg of food supplements to the affected families in Odek sub-county.

"We are doing this because everyone counts; today's child is tomorrow's employee; today's child is tomorrow's customer and today's child is tomorrow's pilot, aircraft engineer, manager; if given a chance to a healthy life," she noted.

Nodding disease syndrome is a neurological disorder which is said to be caused by black flies and has been widely reported the districts along the River Aswa belt in northern Uganda.

Police officers held theft of Hoima airp

HOIMA

By Robert Atuhairwe

Hoima Grade One Magistrates' Court has remanded eight people, including two Police officers for three weeks in Kiryatete government prison on charges of theft.

The same court also issued criminal summons against detective Francis Otekat, the commander of Albertine Police Flying Squad who is still at large.

They are accused of stealing fuel and construction materials from SBC, a company contracted to build Hoima International Airport.

Court presided over by Grade One Magistrate Daniel Bwambale on Wednesday remanded Kizito Sserwanja, a resident of Nsangi in Wakiso district, Sulaiman Yiga, resident of Kyengera Wakiso district, Joel Kigi, a resident of Wampewu Wakiso district and Ju Ssekidde, a resident Lyantonde district.

Others are Jc Mbabazi of Kyarwaby cell in Hoima municipality, Valence Gasibwa Buikwe district, Emmanuel Ntale, an officer attached to Central Police and Farouk, a resident Ndeeba in Kampala.

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