

# Australian builds sh1.9b health centre

**AGAGO**

By Arnest Tumwesige

Excitement rocked residents of Pacer parish in Parabongo sub-county, Agago district when an Australian farmer handed over a fully fledged health centre to the district local government leaders.

The project, worth over sh1.9b, includes a hybrid solar-powered piped water scheme, which has the capacity to supply water within a radius of more than 3sqkm and two staff blocks with eight staff units.

The project, which will benefit 54,600 people, was funded by Ridley Bell, the proprietor of Mountain Blue Farms in Australia. He handed it over on Monday.

Pacer Health Centre II was constructed 20 years ago and Bell, an Australian farmer, through World Vision, gave it a facelift.

Innocent Ongom, who heads the health centre, said since the facility became functional two months ago, the outpatient department enrolment has increased from 30 patients a day to 100. This has been replicated in the inpatient admissions, antenatal care and safe mother delivery.

Ongom, however, pointed out that since the facility is



Moriku (right) handing over a plaque to Bell (second right) on behalf of the community

classified under level II, its drug allocation is no longer able to serve the increasing number of patients.

"Drugs are delivered, but within two weeks, they are over. Since the facility received new infrastructure, we are overwhelmed by the patients and we end up borrowing from other facilities," he added.

Dr Emmanuel Otto, the Agago district health officer,

**BETWEEN THE LINES:**

■ Bell was moved by the need in the community and through World Vision, he upgraded the health centre.

called on the Government to upgrade the facility to level III as soon as the laboratory is

constructed.

According to the recent health ministry policy, diagnosis must be based on the evidence produced by the laboratory tests.

Otto said health service delivery in the district has improved significantly in the area of safe mother delivery, from 38% in the last five years to 85%.

However, the Agago district

Woman MP, Franca Judith Akello, said the district does not have a government health centre IV.

Similarly, two of the 16 sub-counties, Patongo and Kalongo, do not have any government health facility.

"It is a big relief to the people of Parabongo. The nearest, Kalongo Hospital, which is located seven kilometres away, is a private facility, which poor people cannot afford," the legislator added.

Akello decried the high level of child marriages in the district, adding that with poor access to health services, some of the young mothers remain home at the time of delivery.

"We are seeing girls aged 12 years being married off and some carrying babies. How will such girls support their families to access education and health services," she asked?

Joyce Moriku Kaducu, the state minister for primary healthcare, said while the Government is trying to ensure proper health service delivery, it is upon the people to safeguard against preventable diseases.

Moriku said some diseases such as typhoid, diarrhoea and cholera are related to sanitation and hygiene and can be prevented by observing cleanliness at home.

**WHAT THEY SAY**



**Evaristo Banya**  
I thank God for bringing this Good Samaritan. It is also good that residents supported the project. My prayer is that the district supports it fully.



**Rose Akidi Ayella**  
As women, it has been hard to walk long distances. But with this facility, our children and expectant mothers will receive good care.

**Loyce Odongo**  
This sub-county does not have any health centre III and this is the only one we have that could handle most of the cases.

