

Regional News

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School feeding programme boosts pupil enrollment in Kamuli

BY SAM CALEB OPIO

KAMULI. Schools in Kamuli District participating in the Iowa State University Uganda Program (ISU-UP) school feeding initiative are reporting significant improvements in pupil enrolment, retention, and academic performance.

Kamuli District Education Officer Joseph Waibi said the programme provides meals to more than 5,000 learners across five primary schools and one secondary school.

"The programme is reducing absenteeism and supporting vulnerable pupils, particularly girls who previously missed school due to hunger," Mr Waibi said at the weekend.

Running since 2006, the ISU-UP programme supports students at Namasagali, St Joseph Naluwoli, Namasagali College Staff School, Kasozi, and Nakanyonyi primary schools by combining daily meals with practical lessons in nutrition, gardening, and other life skills.

Nearly 20 years on, it remains a vital hub of learning and community support, providing modern kitchens and sanitation facilities for efficient and dignified meal preparation.

Students now enjoy *Nyoyo*, a meal comprising maize and beans at lunch, and porridge made of *dodo*, soya, and milk, a powerful, nutrient-rich combination in the morning.

The school feeding programme links education and well-being, with parents, children, and ISU-UP all playing a role.

Parents provide maize and firewood, children help in kitchens and gardens, and when contributions fall short, ISU-UP steps in to ensure every child is fed.

Mr Gideon Nadiope, ISU-UP National/Country Director, explained that the ISU-UP School Feeding Programme

goes beyond providing meals by integrating agronomy, livestock, architecture, and skilling initiatives.

Mr Nadiope said students learn to grow food, care for animals, and build infrastructure, nurturing both their bodies and minds while developing practical skills for the future.

"This programme is more than a meal; it is an act of love and a statement that every child, regardless of background, deserves to learn, grow, and dream with a full stomach, a story of community, commitment, and hope served on a plate," Mr Nadiope said.

Mr Valentine Oboth, the head teacher of Naluwoli Primary School, said: "Feeding at Naluwoli was really tough. Stu-

dents often missed school because of hunger, but now that is changing," he said.

Ms Edisa Kasowole, a cook at Namasagali Primary School, expressed gratitude, saying: "We thank ISU-UP for the wonderful work. These meals mean everything to our children."

Learners Dalton Ochege (P5), Daniel Sembera (P6), and Abdul Oti (P2), praised the programme, comparing it to the Biblical teaching where Jesus fed a multitude of 5,000 people, saying it has saved them from hunger, as several of their peers only have one meal a day at home.

The Iowa State University Uganda Programme, managed by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Centre for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods, works in Kamuli to improve food, nutrition, education, and security.

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