



**PROLONGED
DRY SPELL**

Residents depend on goat milk

A boy from Nacuku Village, Karita Sub-county, Amuria District looks at the animals as his sister milks a goat. Currently, more than 70 per cent of Amudat residents depend on goats and sheep milk as their major source of livelihood and food following a prolonged drought that hit Karamoja Sub-region.

PHOTO BY RICHARD OTIM

Luuka pupils abandon school to work on sugarcane plantations

Cause. Leaders attribute the increased child labour cases in Luuka to famine which forces parents to send their children to sugarcane plantations in search of food.

BY TAUSI NAKATO
tnakato@ug.nationmedia.com

LUUKA. The Luuka District inspector of schools, Ms Jane Nabwire, has said 12 per cent of the pupils in the district have dropped out of school to offer cheaper labour at sugarcane and rice plantations.

Ms Nabwire attributed the increased child labour cases to famine which she said has propelled parents to send their children to sugarcane plantations in search of food.

She said they have now started sensitising all stakeholders on the need for children to go to school.

"We have held several meetings

with most of the stakeholders to sensitise them on the need to educate their children. We are working on it because sometimes police intervene to chase the children from the sugarcane plantations and trucks. Child labour has forced most of the children in some of the schools to attend schools during the examination time and that is the reason why Luuka always the worst in performance," she said.

Ms Nabwire said though most of the schools in Luuka are under Universal Primary Education, many parents have not embraced the programme and force their children to engage in child labour instead of taking them to school.

At Bugabula Church of Uganda Primary School in Bugabula Village, Bulongo Sub-county, the number of boys attending school reduces every day as many decide to engage in

CHILD PROTECTION

The Constitution of Uganda, 1995, Chapter I, Article 34 (4), provides for the protection of a child from hazardous and exploitative work. The 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (UNCRC) stipulates that children should be protected from economic exploitation and any work that is hazardous, interferes with schooling, or is harmful to their health and development.

sugarcane cutting.

Mr Moses Kyakulaga, the head teacher of Bugabula Church of Uganda Primary School, said out of 895 pupils, 453 are girls, 442 are boys an indication in the reduction in the number of boys attending classes.

"Like in Primary Seven, we have 30 boys, compared to 42 girls, most of the boys have abandoned studies and decided to involve in sugarcane cutting yet in the past, girls were few compared to boys as some were married off before they could complete primary," he said.

At Nabitaama Primary School, Mr John Baptist Kafuko, said child labour has greatly affected the performance of the school, especially in Primary Leaving Examinations.

At Bukendi Primary School in

CONTINUES TO PAGE 10

briefly

Minister orders arrest

TORORO: Minister of State for Health Sarah Achieng Opendi has ordered police to arrest people found misusing insecticide treated mosquito nets. Ms Opendi issued the directive while commissioning an insectary in Tororo Town. "Misusing insecticide treated mosquito nets must stop because it gives a bad impression to the donor community. I am therefore directing local leaders at all levels to liaise with the police to arrest individuals found misusing the nets," she said. [Joseph Omollo]

Mothers advised

NAMUTUMBA: The officer in charge of Nsinze Health Centre IV, Mr Tom Kamisa, has advised expectant mothers to always seek antenatal care from health centres based in their sub-counties and also use them during time of delivering to avoid life threatening incidents and children born with abnormalities. Speaking to *Daily Monitor* recently, Mr Kamisa urged local leaders to take the lead in sensitising mothers about the benefits of delivering in nearby health centres. [Ronald Seebe]

Luuka pupils abandon school to work on sugarcane plantations

FROM PAGE 9

Voices



"Like in Primary Five, we have 18 boys compared to 27 girls. Boys engage in sugarcane cutting because many are bread winners of their families....."

RICHARD KIISA
KIRUNDA, BUKENDI
PRIMARY SCHOOL
HEAD TEACHER



"There is Universal Primary Education but some parents adamantly refuse to take their children to school and instead engage them in child labour. But even the leaders like the inspector of schools have not supervised these schools to rectify the problem and officials from the district have also paid a deaf ear."

FRED KANYARE,
RESIDENT OF KIBUTO
VILLAGE

Bukendi village, Bulongo Sub-county, the head teacher, Mr Richard Kiisa Kirunda, said some children are the bread winners of the families due to escalating poverty in the area.

"Like in Primary Five, we have 18 boys compared to 27 girls. Boys engage in sugarcane cutting because many are bread winners of their families, if it is not harvesting season for sugarcane, they engage in fish farming or at rice plantations where they are hired to scare away birds," Mr Kirunda said.

Mr Fred Kanyare, a resident of Kibuto village in Bulongo Sub-county, Luuka District, said poverty and ignorance are some of the key issues that push children into forced labour.

The Luuka District chairperson, Mr Baker Luwangula, said since sugarcane growing is the major source of income for many people in the district, this prompts parents to force their children to engage in sugarcane cutting to earn a living.

He said the district has taken measures against child labour through liaising with the police and other security organs.

"We are making ambushes when hunting for suspects of child labour by the intervention of police and it is somehow working out, we also sensitise the community on the importance of taking children to school," Mr Luwangula said.

He said they have also made some ordinances where those with sugarcane plantations are not allowed to employ children.

The Luuka Resident District Commissioner, Mr Steven Bewayo, said child labour persists because sugarcane growers and transporters target cheaper labour.

"Many of the sugarcane growers are complaining of denying them cheap labour when we refuse them to employ children. They pay them between Shs1,000 and Shs2,500 a day compared to a situation when they employ the adults," Mr Bewayo said.