

Contractor abandons World Bank project

ARUA

By Robert Ariaka

Ulepi Secondary School administration and education stakeholders in Arua district are searching for the owners of Cimeel Construction Company after they abandoned a multi-million World Bank project at the school.

The project, Adopted Programme Loan 1, funded by the World Bank to the tune of over sh260m was awarded to Cimeel Engineering Limited on July 6, 2011 and over sh129m was paid to the contractor to undertake the construction.

The money had been earmarked for the construction of a library, two classroom blocks, five-stance toilet and completion of a four-classroom block.

The contractor was paid during the tenure of Mike Arigabile, the former headteacher, who was transferred to Nyapea Secondary School, before completion of the work.

The records in the school file indicate that on December 20, 2011, a certificate number 1 was issued to Cimeel Engineering Ltd with over sh25m paid and Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) withholding tax of sh3m.

The records also indicate that on August 16, 2011, Cimeel Engineering Ltd was paid over sh48m advance money with URA withholding tax amounting to over sh1m.

The Ulepi Secondary School financial statement as at November 22, 2013 indicates that over sh79m out of sh129m had been spent out of the



Adaku (wearing jacket) and Opalto at the excavation site of the five-stance toilet at the school in Arua. Photos by Robert Ariaka

project money.

Only raised slab

Matua Opalto, the current headteacher, says work started in 2012 and the contractor only managed to raise the

library slab, the walls of the two classroom blocks, whereas, toilet work stopped at excavation.

Opalto said the school has only three classrooms and this has forced the administration

to accommodate Senior One students in the laboratory.

"I want the Government to trace the contractor since he was brought by the education ministry. We do not know his whereabouts," Opalto said.

He also wants legal action taken against the contractor for delaying the work, which has affected performance of the learners.

About the school

Ulepi, with an enrolment of 150 students, has 18 teachers on government payroll with only three accommodated at the school.

Way forward

Genesis Acema, the Arua district vice-chairperson, told *New Vision* that the district had written to the education ministry asking them to sort out the contractor mess.

WHAT THEY SAY



Matua Opalto, headteacher
Work started in 2012 and the contractor only raised the library slab.



Henry Oyirwoth, S4 student
We are unable to read and access textbooks due to the absence of the library.



John Adaku, LC3 chairperson
The contractor should be traced and made to refund the money.