

Butaleja gets health, water boost

BUTALEJA

By George Bita

Fatuma Tabo would walk over eight kilometres from Bugolola B village to Busolwe Hospital in Butaleja district for medical attention, whenever she fell sick.

"It was a very difficult journey to make, especially so during the rainy season, when some low-lying areas flooded. But it was the only solution to getting treatment," Tabo says.

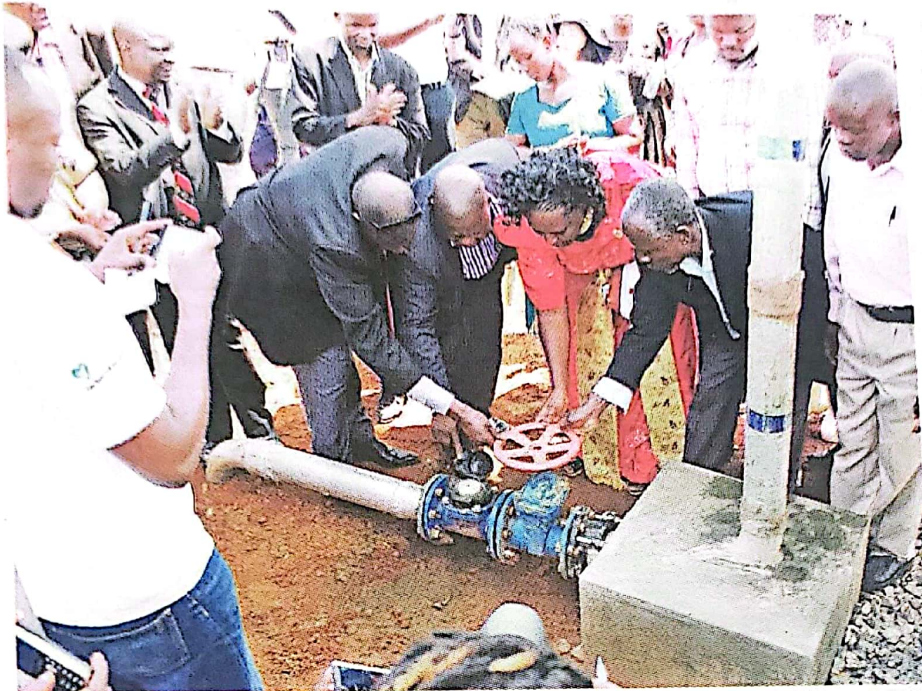
Nathanaili Higenyi, a village health team (VHT) member for Lwamboga, says even if World Vision had provided them with bicycles to deliver basic medication to villagers, the long distances would compromise timely delivery.

"Our role involves handing out deworming tablets, anti-malaria drugs and pain killers. However, the challenges still remained, given that most local health centres were in a sorry state," Higenyi noted.

Currently, intervention in the health and water sector by development partners working with the Government, seems to have put a smile on not only Tabo's face, but the entire community.

Richard Waya, the LC5 chairperson of Butaleja, said the majority of the estimated 300,000 locals are poor and cannot afford basic healthcare.

"That is why World Vision and Korea International Co-operation Agency (KOICA)



Butaleja district officials launching the water project at Nabiganda Health Centre III, courtesy of World Vision in partnership with KOICA. Photo by George Bita

need to be commended for helping out. They have, through a multi-billion project, turned round the water sanitation and hygiene status of Butaleja," he said.

Waya said he was in the team that drafted a letter that solicited for aid from KOICA almost five years ago.

Current status

According to Paul Ayesiga, the World Vision regional engineer, eight local health

BETWEEN THE LINES:

World Vision, in partnership with KOICA, refurbished eight local health centres.

centres have been revamped with the addition of a maternity ward, staff houses plus pit latrines and washrooms.

Gilbert Kamanga, the World Vision country director, said they also constructed

classroom blocks in several schools.

"The best contraceptive to give a girl-child is education. Butaleja has many child marriage cases, but with better school structures, attendance is likely to improve," Kamanga said.

KOICA country director for Uganda Youngsuk Jun said she was happy that the community can now benefit from the project.

Richard Gulume, the

resident district commissioner, appealed to locals to make use of the improved health centres whenever they require medical attention.

Dr. Ivan Mukasa, the district health officer, said the improved health facilities have contributed significantly to increase in the number of health workers.

"By 2015, the staffing level was at 53%, but the figure is now at 70%. This is partly due to the new staff houses and improved working space," Mukasa said.

Way forward

Gulume said the Government would work with development partners to ensure that the revamped health centres stay in usable condition. "These are key public facilities needed to save lives. So we shall maintain them for many years to come," he assures.

Milly Mugeni, the Butaleja Woman MP, urged women to deliver from the new maternity wards at the health centres.

"Two months ago, I led by example and gave birth at one of these wards at Busaba Health Centre III. I want all expectant women to emulate this to the ensure safety of both mother and child," Mugeni said.

Waya pledged that the local government would provide more delivery beds to the health units, as well as solicit for machines like oxygen concentrators and incubators.

Your SAY

Flavia Kwagala, resident of Bunyanga village

I appreciate the new buildings at Busaba Health Centre.

Nowadays, when I fall sick, I simply walk across the road to get treatment.



Don Mulebehe, Butaleja district vice-chairman

The work done by World Vision speaks for itself. We are indeed very grateful for the boost given to our social services.



Harriet Kalenda, midwife at Bubalya Health Centre III

The new staff quarter block has enabled three more health

workers to reside near the health centre. It is a great relief as patients can now be attended to anytime.

