

Locals fundraise for own hospital

Hands-on. The residents are fundraising the money to help buy delivery beds and mattresses to re-equip Busolwe Hospital.

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BUTALEJA. Residents of Butaleja District have taken the concept of 'do it yourself' to a level higher.

The residents, who have waited in vain for years for government to step in and repair, modify or rebuild their former first-rate hospital, have now resolved to do it themselves.

The locals on Tuesday launched a Shs12m fundraising drive to help buy delivery beds and mattresses to re-equip Busolwe Hospital in Butaleja District.

The 'Save Busolwe Hospital' drive follows stories published by *Daily Monitor* about the depressing state of the 120-bed capacity health facility that was built in 1970 during the Milton Obote I regime but crumbling with no running water.

The residents, under their umbrella association Nanghirisa Development Association, say they have partnered with other groups to solicit funds from residents and well-wishers to re-equip the hospital.

By Tuesday evening, the residents had collected Shs1.5 million in cash.

The hospital serves about 40,000 patients and has for the past 10 years



Sorry state. A patient lies on a bed without a mattress in one of the wards at Busolwe Hospital in Butaleja District. PHOTO BY YAHUDU KITUNZI

“As people of Butaleja, the condition of Busolwe hospital has been haunting our conscience like a bad spirit,” DAVID MULABI, NANGHIRISA DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT

been grappling with several problems, including rotting beds, lack of equipment, poor sewage system, and dilapidated structures.

Mr Charles Fagayo, a member of the organising committee, said: “We target to collect money to buy at least 100 mattresses and beds for the hospital because the situation is

alarming and calls for collective efforts.”

Mr David Mulabi, the association president, said the campaign is driven by the need to give back to the community.

“Many of us who live and work in Kampala have access to good health-care, but our mothers and sisters back home do not have that privilege. Moreover, many of us were born in that hospital. We cannot just stand and do nothing,” he said.

The Programme Coordinator, African Women Service Trust, Ms Betty Nesihwe, another member of the association, said the campaign

is aimed at activating the people's self determination to support themselves instead of waiting for government.

Former Bunyole East MP Emmanuel Dombo said the initiative is a vote of no confidence in the current leadership.

But the Butaleja Chief Administrative Officer, Mr Alex Felix Majeme, welcomed the idea. He, however, said government is planning to give the hospital a facelift.

The Woman MP, Ms Milly Mugeni, donated some mattresses to Busolwe Hospital and Budumba Health centre III, last week.