

Iganga Hospital gets sh12b facelift

IGANGA

By George Bitu

Five years ago, Iganga Hospital was sick. The hospital is over forty years old.

Some wards were leaking and the lavatories almost dysfunctional. The mosquito-guard nets in ward windows had long been destroyed.

However, the state of affairs has changed as the establishment now boasts new structures that have changed its appearance.

How did change come?

Sarah Opendi, the health minister for general duties, said sh12b was secured under the Uganda Health Systems Strengthening Project to see Iganga Hospital have a new face.

"The money was obtained from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank with a target of boosting our health sector," Opendi said.

She added that the nationwide project involved renovation of 47 health facilities including two regional referral hospitals, 17 general hospitals and 27 health centre IVs.

Dr David Muwanguzi, the district health officer, said China National Aero-technology Engineering Corporation handled the two-year project that kicked off in 2014.

Current status

Iganga Hospital now boasts a new refrigerated mortuary with capacity of nine bodies, a casualty block, outpatient department, operating theatre, staff quarters, contemporary kitchen

and revamped maternity ward.

"We shall not have cases of decomposing bodies at the mortuary anymore unless brought in when already in bad shape," Muwanguzi said.

He added that the new mortuary is fitted with workers' quarters supplied with piped water, toilets and bathrooms.

Wilson Wang Sen, the project manager, said with a standby 80KVA generator at the premises, there would be unlimited power supply.

"Even if the power goes off, the backup generator would keep the refrigeration system operational so that the mortuary remains effective," Wang Sen said.

Dr Stephen Kirya, the hospital medical superintendent, said the new casualty ward comes in handy for the emergencies mainly from accidents along the Jinja-Tororo highway.

"We have an average 12 accident victims daily. This includes the bodaboda victims," Kirya said.

Records show that an average of 400 patients show up daily though the hospital was built to operate at a 100-bed capacity in 1968.

Kirya said the number of patients is much lower lately due to the ongoing doctors' strike, with many patients opting for private clinics in town.

Challenges

Opendi advised Iganga Hospital management to embrace toilets and do away with unsightly pit latrines at the premises.

"The onus is on you, administrators, to educate these patients regularly on proper use of toilets. Ensure there is

The new mortuary complex at Iganga Hospital.
Photo by George Bitu



WHAT OTHERS SAY



David Basoga, resident:

The hospital had been neglected for long and was dilapidated. This project has given it a much-needed new look.



Mariam Namususwa, resident of Busei parish: The new buildings are welcome, but they may not help

much without ample drugs and health workers. At times you go to hospital and you are told to buy own medicine elsewhere.

Beatrice Tikoyi, nurse:

It boosts morale to work in improved space that is not congested. Some diseases such as influenza spread easily when people crowd in small rooms.



toilet paper and that the places remain neat after every use," Opendi said. The minister warned that the issue of hygiene should not be overlooked while seemingly concentrating on just treating patients.

She urged management to think of partitioning off an isolation ward at the health facility, saying the region has many tuberculosis cases, necessitating the presence of such a

unit. According to Kirya, an unpaid electricity bill of over sh200m has not made matters any easier at the health facility where services mostly depend on reliable power supply.

He said the lack of a perimeter wall around the hospital has allowed neighbours to graze their domestic animals on the health facility premises. This, he says, has compromised hygiene.

"Sometimes cow dung, abandoned ropes or animal urine ends up on walkways, which makes the area unsightly.

"These locals are stubborn and the only solution is fencing off the hospital land," Kirya said.

He said with just sh13m received on a monthly basis to run the hospital, nothing much can be done to change the plight of the health facility.

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