

Kyankwanzi children drop out of school to offer labour in maize gardens

KYANKWANZI

By Nelson Kiva

The number of children dropping out of school to offer cheap labour in gardens is on the rise in Kyankwanzi district.

This has left the district education department contemplating a comprehensive solution. They appealed for support from authorities to avert the trend.

Data at the district probation and welfare department indicate that over 54% of the over 41,000 children in the district were out of school and working.

Maize farmers are cited as the major employers of these children. According to the Kyankwanzi production department, the district ranked third in maize production nationwide, with sub-counties of Gayaza, Bananywa, Butemba, Ntwetwe-Kitabona, Nsambya and Watuba putting several metric tonnes on the market every season.

The Kyankwanzi district education officer, Ibrahim Kabuka, said it was becoming a problem to keep children in schools because of the demand for cheap labour.

He said some were being exploited by their own parents. "As a department, we have embarked on the sensitisation of parents, school management committees and community leaders to take charge in the fight against school dropouts," Kabuka said.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

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He said the most affected sub-counties are Ntwetwe-Kitabona, Gayaza and Bananywa.

"In the sub-counties of Gayaza and Bananywa, over 80% of the children were out of school, while in Ntwetwe-Kitabona out of the over 3,000 children in the sub-county, over 52.4% were out of school working," Kabuka said.

According to him, it was worrying that some of the children started working as early as five years old.

During the breaking of the ground ceremony to construct a community school by an NGO, Building

Tomorrow, at Runyana village, Banda sub-county in Kyankwanzi sub-county, the district Woman MP, Ann Maria Nankabirwa, said parents should strive towards a complete education for their children.

"I want to thank the community members for mobilising land to establish the school. It was a sign of commitment to supporting education of our children," she said.

The district LC5 chairman, Leopold Ddamulira, thanked Building Tomorrow for constructing five schools at Ruyana, Kiryamusunku, Kisodo and Kamukanga.

He said the district had a small budget of only sh56m every financial year to construct two classroom blocks.

Kinene said he had also directed the LC3 chairpersons, sub-county and parish chiefs to supervise villages and apprehend all parents and children who were not at school.

The country director, Building Tomorrow, Joseph Kaliisa Bagambaki, said at every site they constructed seven classroom blocks for primary, nursery section, staffroom, library and compound designing while the residents provided land and the unskilled labour.