

Mulago nutrition unit overwhelmed by children

KAMPALA

By Agnes Nantambi

Mwana Mugimu nutrition Unit in Mulago Hospital is overwhelmed by the number of abandoned children from single mothers. Most of the children suffer from cerebral palsy while others are HIV positive.

According to the deputy head of the unit, Rose Namazzi Nakayiza, the unit receives about 20 children abandoned mostly from single mothers who are HIV-positive.

"Others are from young girls who were made pregnant by irresponsible men forcing them to abandon the babies at the unit when faced with feeding problems," she said.

Nakayiza said the unit on average admits 96 children per month out of which, 20 are just abandoned and 16% of the 20 abandoned die due to lack of proper feeding and care.

"We are happy that we have some organisations, which take on the children for rehabilitation after improvement at the unit. However, due to failure to comply with the hospital recommendations, most times they are brought back in poor



Shanta Pater gives a Christmas gift to one the babies while his father looks on.
Photo by Agnes Nantambi

shape and end up dying," she said. Most of the children are abandoned at the age of two years and below.

Nakayiza, however, complained that the unit does not have nutritional requirements for the children.

"Sometimes children react to the milk available and we end

up opting for expensive milk, which we cannot afford.

Therefore, when they get tolerant to that expensive milk, their survival rate automatically reduces," she added.

Namazzi after receiving Christmas gifts from Opar Foundation, an Indian charity group that helps less privileged

children, appealed to the Government to link up with organisations that can help the unit during the times of crises.

The executive director of Opar Foundation, Shanta Pater, observed the need to instill hope among the less privileged children by helping them.