



Hard work. Pupils of Abok Primary School in Oyam District during their free time at school last week. PHOTO BY BILL OKETCH.

Oyam authorities move to improve education standards

New measures. The district authorities are coming up with new measures to make sure that the reading ability of children in primary schools is improved.

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OYAM. Hundreds of pupils in government-aided primary schools in Oyam District have not been prepared by their teachers to read because of a number of challenges facing government's literacy strategy.

Oyam District ranked 109 out of 112 districts that participated in the sixth household-based assessment of learning outcomes conducted by Uwezo in September and October 2015.

In Oyam, 929 children from 401 households in 30 villages were assessed for basic literacy and numeracy skills during the survey.

However, the survey revealed that children do not perform to the expected standards.

According to the report, very few children in Primary Three are able to read Primary Two material.

Oyam District speaker Chris Ongom said many councillors in the area do not know how to speak or construct proper English sentences because of "poor foundation".

"Civil servants keep on laughing at us [councillors] during council meetings. You (civil servants) are laughing at us because the foundation was bad. There is nothing we can do about it," he said.

However, the district authorities are coming up with new measures to make sure that the reading ability of children in primary schools is improved.

Mr Peter Geoffrey Adonyo, the district inspector of schools, said government has trained and deployed qualified teachers to handle literacy programmes in the district, especially in lower primary section.

"Government has also put in place policies regarding literacy in our pri-

Voice

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CHRIS ONGOM, OYAM DISTRICT SPEAKER

mary schools. For example, government has put in place a policy that the teaching and learning processes in lower primary classes (Primary One to Primary Three) should be done in the local language," Mr Adonyo said.

There are also a number of development partners in the area that are working with the district to address the issue of literacy in primary schools.

"We are doing everything possible to make sure that our children read. However, there are still a number of challenges," Mr Adonyo added.

He cited lack of or inadequate reading materials as one of the main challenges.

However, critics argue that children in private schools are better than their counterparts in government schools.

Mr Adonyo agrees, but associated this to the employment terms

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briefly

Transport paralysed

MOYO: Transport from Itula Sub-county to Obongi County in Moyo District has been paralysed following heavy rain in the region, which has rendered the roads impassable. Travellers now spend hours on the road trying to pull vehicles out of muddy sections. "Some traders are losing their goods on the way because they cannot reach the market in time. Those dealing in perishable goods such as fresh fish are suffering a lot. We have been asking government to work on the roads in vain," Mr Juma Abase, a resident of Itula Sub-county, told *Daily Monitor* on Monday. [Scovin Icteta]

NEW PAC team sworn in

AMOLATAR: New members of Amolatar District Public Accounts Committee were last Thursday sworn in at the district headquarters at a ceremony presided over by Amolatar Grade One Magistrate, Mr Abrahams Achok Moding. Immediately after being sworn in, the new PAC members proceeded to elect Mr Abraham Moses Otile as their chairperson for the next five years. Magistrate Achok urged the new team to remain united and act decisively to protect public resources in the district. "Your works is to check the management of public resources in the district," Mr Otile said. [Bill Oketch]

Oyam moves to improve education standards

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of teachers in government-aided schools and private schools.

"In private institutions, teachers work on contract and once you mess around, your contract is terminated forthwith," he said.

He, however, said government is now investing more money to support the district education sector.

"For example, Oyam currently receives inspection grants from the government every term. The money is to enable inspectors of schools to assess and monitor teachers so that they are on task.

Mr Nelson Adea, the district chairperson, acknowledged that despite interventions by development partners and government, the district performance is not yet convincing.

"But I'm happy to say that we have gone down on the ground, met teachers and set for them targets, we have told them exactly what to do," he said.

"We have even mobilised and sensitised our school management committees and Parents Teachers Associations and we are doing everything to ensure that our education performance improves," he added.

Under the new initiative, children will be monitored to ensure that they attend school on regular basis and on time. Teachers are also expected to attend school every day, and when they are in schools, they must be in their respective classes teaching according to the time table.

Mr Adea revealed that they have vacancies for more than 300 teachers but they are going to replace about 100 this financial year.

Ms Anna Ekol, the district secretary for health and education, said their development partners have also trained members of the school management committees and PTAs on their roles and responsibilities in the district.

The outgoing district education officer, Mr Norman Okello, thanked the ministry of Education for supporting the monitoring and supervision of schools in the district.

He said before he handed over office recently, the ministry had already submitted some tools that the head teachers should use and report monthly to the DEO for appropriate action.

SURVEY

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