

Stop corporal punishment in schools, urges US envoy

KAYUNGA

By Charles Jjuuko

The US Ambassador to Uganda, Deborah Malac, has asked teachers to stop subjecting learners to corporal punishment.

She said such penal action encourages children to drop out of school.

Malac made the remarks while addressing residents of Kasana-Bukolwa in Busaana sub-county, Kayunga district during a community dialogue on Monday.

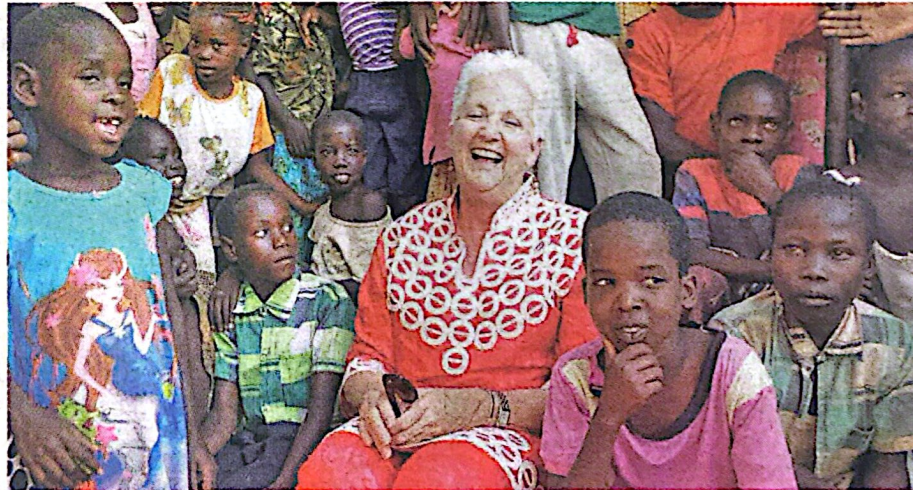
The meeting was organised to mark the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence, with this year's focus on corporal punishment in schools.

"Children should be taken to school and efforts should be made to ensure they learn in an environment that suits their completion of education," Malac said.

She also asked parents to treat their children equally as regards provision of social needs.

The dialogue was jointly organised by the Community Awareness and Response on AIDS (CARA), a local NGO, and Research Triangle Institute, with support from USAID.

Willy Kabiyaamba, CARA's executive director, said they had



Ambassador Malac sharing a light moment with children after a community meeting at Kasana-Bukolwa village in Kayunga district on Monday. Photo by Charles Jjuuko

trained over 148 community change agents in Kayunga to facilitate reflective discussions on gender equity, power relations and domestic violence.

He said the agents have engaged residents through what he termed as "journey activities" to shift social norms and behaviour, which usually contribute to gender-based violence in households and other areas of life.

The district's senior inspector

BETWEEN THE LINES:

One of the reasons children are dropping out of school is corporal punishment. Ambassador Malac says this must stop.

of schools, Moses Olok, said the Government had trained teachers of P1 to P3 in extra skills to enable them sustain learners in schools.

Olok added that school management committees have also been trained to assess the learning environment in order to address issues, such as violation of children's rights in schools.

During the meeting, community members, led by the village chairperson, Champlain Kiya, said corporal punishment, such as lifting heavy objects and caning, have driven many learners out of school.

MBARARA

