



**IN SEARCH OF WATER**

## SURVIVAL

A boy herds cattle on his way back home after grazing in Moroto District recently. The scorching sun that left many places dry push pastoralists to trek long distances in search of water and pasture for their animals.

PHOTO BY STEVEN ARONG

# Katakwi residents, cattle share contaminated water

**Concern.** They say despite their cries to authorities to construct more boreholes to get clean water in the area, nothing has been done.

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**KATAKWI.** When Ms Helen Apule, 22, got married, she knew her next residence would be at Ongongoja Village in Ongongoja Sub-county, Katakwi District.

One of her roles as housewife was to ensure that the day's meals are ready on time. However, this task is harder as she lives in a water-scarce village.

From her home to the nearby water source is 4kms.

For more than 35 years now, this

borehole is the only source of "clean water" for many families. They share it with domestic animals.

"Each day is a struggle for me as I search for water. I wake up very early and walk 4kms. I make three routes a day to ensure there is enough water at home," Ms Apule explains.

She narrates that in addition to long distance, the water is not clean and the consequences associated with it are immense. Her three-year-old child was recently diagnosed with typhoid, a disease attributed to drinking contaminated water.

"The borehole water sometimes comes with termites and worms. What we call clean water is not safe for us to drink and use at home" Ms Apule notes.

The sub-county has more than 22 boreholes, most of them broken down. The water scarcity haunts the

## ISSUE

One borehole serves an entire sub-county and the water is contaminated. The residents are living in fear that they may contaminate water borne diseases in an area where health services are also still poor. However, government plans to construct 250 water harvesting tanks as a solution to water scarcity in the area.

residents both in dry and rainy seasons.

"Since the start of this year, we have had several cases of typhoid fever and it is expensive to treat. This is because of the contaminated borehole," Mr Michael Odem, another resident, narrates.

He says four villages draw water from his village borehole.

Pointing at a water pond created by cattle that throng the borehole for drinking, Mr Odem tells *Daily Monitor* that they have to endure the stench from cow dung to access water. He says government needs to rescue them if they are to stay healthy because the local leadership lacks money to respond quickly to the needs.

According to the area LC3 chair-

## briefly

### Child pregnancies worrying

**BUGIRI:** Bugiri District authorities have expressed concern over the increasing cases of child pregnancy among pupils. According to a survey conducted by World Vision Uganda in the last one year, 29 per cent of pupils in the sub-counties of Nabukalu, Buwunga, Buluguyi, Muterere and Nankoma were impregnated. While presenting the report to the district leaders last week, the programmes manager of World Vision, Mr Edward Khaukha, said there is need for government intervention to identify the exact cause of child pregnancies. [Asuman Musobya]

### Man jilted, hangs self

**BUIKWE:** A 43-year-old man on Sunday committed suicide after his wife allegedly left him for another man. Police who identified the deceased as Emmanuel Nkumikiriza, a resident of Kizungu Zone in Njeru Municipality, suspected him to have committed suicide three days back. The Ssezibwa Regional police spokesperson, Ms Helen Butoto, said the deceased killed himself using a bedsheet. The body was found hanging in his rented room. [Denis Edema]

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## Katakwi women trek long distances to get water

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### Voices

"I have always maintained my stand. Ongongoja Sub-county needs an affirmative action for both water sources and roads construction."

WILLIAM OMEKE,  
ONGONGOJA SUB-COUNTY CHAIRPERSON

person, Mr William Omeke, water is not the only problem.

"The scarcity of safe drinking water is not only in dry season but a crisis all year through. Wells that served people during rainy season are also silted and they need to be worked on," he explains.

He says the most hit villages with hardly a working borehole are: Okoco, Okuda, Oserein and Okudasama.

"I have always maintained my stand. Ongongoja Sub-county needs an affirmative action for both water sources and roads construction," Mr Omeke says.

"NGOs withdrew from this area, but we implore on them to return. The water crisis here is beyond our reach, our children in schools struggle to find water and so are their teachers," he adds.

He claims government has for long not heeded to their pleas to have the wells de-silted and valley dams constructed to separate humans' water sources from those of the animals.

However, Katakwi District water officer Lydia Apio says Ongongoja Sub-county is not being neglected.

She says boreholes sunk in, leading to loss of millions of shillings and that others cannot be successful because of a rocky surface.

"Of all places in the district, it is only in Ongongoja that you find a host of nonfunctional boreholes. This is a result of an underlying rock which hampers construction of boreholes. We have only succeeded in a few places and the boreholes are running."

LYDIA APIO, KATAKWI DISTRICT WATER OFFICER

Ms Apio says with plans by the Ministry of Water and Environment to put up 250 water harvesting tanks, there is hope that the sub-county will be relieved especially during rainy seasons.

According to Dr Emmanuel Tumwesigye of the WSS Services Limited, a firm hired by the ministry to oversee the new project, the 250 tanks will have a good water handling capacity to enable the host family to share with others.

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## briefly

Minister urges teachers