

Kabarole VHTs receive bicycles to fight malnutrition

KABAROLE

By Wilson Asiimwe

The Ministry of Health with funding from the World Bank has provided 230 bicycles to Village Health Teams in Kabarole district to fight malnutrition.

Paul Katisa, the project assistant co-ordinator for Uganda Multi-Sectoral Food Security and nutrition project, said on Tuesday while handing over the bicycles at the district headquarters in Kitumba, that the bicycles will help the VHT and lead farmers in sensitising the communities on proper nutrition.

He said over 53% of the children and women from 15-49 years are anaemic while 47% are malnourished.

"In order to address the problem of malnutrition in Kabarole, the project has introduced a variety of micro-nutrient rich foods such as iron-rich beans, African egg plants and orange fresh sweet potatoes. We are using government schools for demonstrations and some few selected farmers in the communities," Katisa said.

He said they are also promoting the production of other vegetables so as to address the challenge of malnutrition among the children.

"The project supports primary



VHTs receiving the bicycles on Tuesday at the district headquarters in Kitumba. Photo by Wilson Asiimwe

BETWEEN THE LINES:

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schools in the production of nutritious foods as well as sensitising pupils and parents on the preparation of the foods so as to address the problem of malnutrition in children and women of child-bearing age," Katisa said.

Steven Asiimwe, the resident district commissioner for Kabarole, warned the VHTs not to sell off

the bicycles, but instead use them to sensitise the people on good feeding.

Recently, Kabarole district was found to have the highest with cases of malnutrition, accounting for over 65% cases of stunted growth and 53% cases of anaemia among children aged between six months and four years.

According to the Ministry of Health nutrition department, malnutrition is a significant public health problem in Uganda and is a direct cause of 35% of all under-five child mortality.

In 2015, *The Cost of Hunger in Africa* study revealed that Uganda loses sh1.8 trillion in a single year due to poor nutrition.

"People in Kabarole continue to export food to the nearby countries of Rwanda, Kenya, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, leaving nothing to feed their families," Enid Katusabe, a community facilitator, said.

Kabarole district recently also started implementing the community therapeutic care programme to curb severe malnutrition.

Under community therapeutic care, trained nutrition specialists move from home to home sensitising people about the dangers of malnutrition and how to avoid it, especially among children.