

INSTEAD OF BEING DEMOLISHED, THE LATRINE WAS INSTEAD REPAINTED TO HIDE THE CRACKS

KAMULI

By Geoffrey Namukoye

Teachers and pupils of Kasozi Primary School in Namasagali sub-county, Kamuli district are putting their lives at risk by using a latrine categorised as 'a risk to human life'.

By the end of last year, Kasozi Primary School had a population of over 1,200 pupils. Whereas the girls had well-ventilated latrine, the boys, who make up the biggest population, continued using a dilapidated latrine.

This urgently called for the construction of another latrine. However, the newly constructed latrine has attracted criticism due to the risk it poses to would-be users.

The fracas started in July last year when residents of Namasagali sub-county demanded a better latrine at Kasozi Primary School after realising that the latrine that had been built was substandard and a danger to their lives.

The woman councillor for Namasagali sub-county, Christine Kaguna, said the latrine had cracks in the floor and walls.

"The construction of the latrine was a timely intervention, but it makes no sense using a structure that puts lives at risk," she said.

The Minister of State for Karamoja Affairs, Moses Kizige, was equally concerned about the level of recklessness exhibited by the contractors. In the school's visitors book, Kizige directed that the latrine be demolished and another constructed under strict supervision.

The resident district commissioner, Moses Dumba and the district chairperson, Thomas Kategere, also visited the school for the same reason and their recommendations did not vary from the minister's.

Whereas the minister's directive seemed strong enough to compel the contractor to demolish the latrine and have a new one constructed, stakeholders were surprised to learn that the latrine was only re-painted, an act that has left the would-be users worried.

"That is the only latrine that can

Lives at risk as pupils use condemned latrine



The poorly constructed pit latrine at Kasozi Primary School has attracted criticism from the residents. Photo by Geoffrey Namukoye

guarantee privacy, but I cannot trust it because the cracks still exist, even if they are covered with paint," said a teacher as unsuspecting pupils dashed towards the condemned latrine.

Sarah Nangobi, the school's headmistress, said they could not do much since the construction of a boys' latrine was long overdue.

"We had no choice but to ask the sub-county authorities to let us use the latrine," Nangobi said.

When asked if she is concerned about the lives of the pupils who use the condemned latrine, Nangobi said for lack of an alternative, frantic efforts were made to have the latrine renovated so it could be ready for use before the beginning of the term.

Residents of Kasozi parish are contemplating a demonstration

"From the look of things, the school has more problems than it can solve." Resident

after they learnt that a certificate of completion has been issued to the contractor after the pit latrine was repainted.

"I have heard about the award of certificate of completion, but I will liaise with the minister (Moses Kizige) to find out if he is aware of this development," Kaguna said.

An elderly lady near the school's borehole said: "From the look of things, the school has more problems than it can solve!"

To put her statement into context, a man standing next to her said: "This school did not receive last year's (2017) PLE results, now our children have been forced to forego a whole year because a mistake they did not make."

Nangobi confirmed the incident, but was quick to blame Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB).

"We are disappointed that UNEB withheld our results, citing examination malpractice," she said.

However, Nangobi was optimistic that calm is likely to be restored as parents had agreed to allow their children to repeat Primary Seven at the same school at no extra cost.