

Celebrations. Acholi cultural festival kicks off



Entertainment Dance troupes perform in Gulu Town yesterday. The Acholi cultural institution premier, Mr Ambrose Olas, yesterday morning flagged off the grand Acholi cultural festival. The event, which is celebrated under the theme "Kwero dayo pa Acholi" (celebrating the Acholi glory) will showcase of various traditional Acholi regalla, dishes, music and drama, games, food and drinks. PHOTO BY JULIUS OCUNGI

Five nodding disease children drown in Omoro

Attacks. Mr Richard Labongo Okello, the Odek Sub-county chairperson, says the children died after developing seizures at water points.

BY JULIUS OCUNGI
editorial@ug.nationmedia.com

OMORO. Five children who were suffering from nodding disease syndrome have drowned in Omoro District on separate occasions this year, local leaders have reported.

The deceased

The children of 14 to 15 years reportedly died in January and June in the villages of Barolam, Odek centre, Olam, Akoyo and Ajan, all in Odek Sub-county.

Mr Richard Labongo Okello, the Odek Sub-county chairperson, told *Daily Monitor* in an interview on Tuesday that the children died after developing seizures at water points.

He said the deceased children were some of those who had been reintegrated into the communities

after undergoing rehabilitation at the Odek nodding syndrome care centre. Mr Okello said some of the children had relapsed due to poor living conditions at their homes since their parents or relatives were unable to give them proper care.

He identified some of the deceased children as Sandrack Kidega and Patrick Okello, who all died in June.

Hope for Humans, a non-governmental organisation supporting Odek care facility, has cut its fund-

ing to the care centre citing financial constraints.

Funding

Ms Suzanne Gazda, the organisation's chief executive officer, in July announced that the board of directors had made a difficult decision to dissolve the organization and transition the children into the care of Ugandan government.

The Omoro District leaders recently asked government to take over management of the facility saying the children suffering and recovering from nodding syndrome were being exposed to more risks.

On Tuesday, Northern Uganda the State minister Grace Kyiwoyiny visited the care facility in Odek and made assurance that government would partner with the district and other stakeholders to ensure the centre is supported.

Currently, 29 children are receiving medical and personal care, special schooling, and nutritious meals at the center while some 237 who were rehabilitated have been reintegrated within communities.

THE CONDITION

Nodding disease syndrome is a mentally and physically disabling condition that only affects children, of ages five and 15. Its symptoms include involuntary uncontrollable nodding of the head, epileptic seizures, saliva dripping, degenerated cognitive abilities, stunted growth among others.