Swimming accidents worry experts

BY GODFRY MASIKO

JINJA. Last week, Edgar Muhoozi, a Uganda Christian University student, drowned in a swimming pool in Kirowoza, Mukono District.

He was rushed to a clinic in Mukono following the incident. Efforts to resuscitate him were unsuccessful.

The incident has renewed debate about the safety of swimming programmes in schools and the qualifications of those supervising learners during practical lessons.

Ms Monica Atukunda, a resident of

cern over the rapid increase in the number of swimming pools without clear regulatory oversight.

"Government should take interest in this matter and set clear guidelines for swimming practicals in schools," she said.

According to a 2024/2025 report by the Makerere University School of Public Health, more than 3,000 people drown annually in Uganda, an average of nine deaths daily, making drowning a significant public health crisis.

The report identifies rural and peri-urban areas as high risk zones, citing lack of safety gear, poor infrastructure and weak enforcement of regulations as key drivers.

Training lifeguards

Stakeholders say strengthening supervision, enforcing safety standards and certifying lifeguards could help curb preventable deaths.

In response, Swim Safe Uganda has launched a three day National Lifeguard Training Programme aimed at equipping swimming instructors and pool operators with lifesaving skills.

Launched in Jinja District last Thursday, 25 trainers were taught lifesaving and first aid skills, with support from the Uganda Aquatics Federation and NSI (a limited company providing water and solar energy solutions in East Africa).

Speaking to the *Daily Monitor*, the organisation's chief executive officer, Mr Moses Kalanzi, said the training intends to equip those in charge of swimming pools with up-to-date lifesaving skills.

Dr Raymond Nsubuga of the Emergency Department at Rubaga Hospital, Kampala said the training covers rescue techniques both in and outside the pool. He said that many trainers previously focused on swimming techniques but lacked knowledge on first aid and emergency response.

"We have trained them on how to rescue someone from the water, administer first aid, and stabilise a victim as they wait for emergency medical services. We have emphasised the importance of calling for professional help in case of emergencies," he said.

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