

10 children to represent Uganda at East Africa spelling competition

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KAMPALA. The national competitions of the East African Spelling Bee finals, held at UMA multipurpose hall in Lugogo, Kampala on Wednesday saw 10 children go through to represent Uganda at the regional level.

The event was officially opened by the commissioner of Basic Education, Mr Tony Lusambu Mukasa, who thanked Dr Anthony Wesaka, the director of Pepea Africa, for initiating the educative project.

"The government, especially the Ministry of Education, is very happy to know about projects that aim at providing literacy to young children and

more so involving schools up-country," he said.

The competition was among the 50 regional winners who graced the stage to battle it out. As they ascended the stage, loud cheers and ululations from schoolmates, teachers and parents who had come to support their favourite candidate followed.

Procedure

Thereafter, the contestants received a set of instructions from judge Juliet Justine Rukundo, *Daily Monitor's* Life magazine editor. The judges included Ms Rukundo and Mr Peter Sserubide, a lecturer of languages at Kyambogo University. The MC of the event was Malaika Nnyanzi, a presenter

on D'Mighty Breakfast show on 933 KFM.

As the event progressed, the tension became more visible among the participants; teachers and parents trembled as it was automatic elimination for any word spelt wrongly.

A mixture of simple and complex words were given to the pupils to spell. Some panicked and failed simple words such as "bold".

As the stages advanced, children were given harder words that even adults from the audience confessed they could hardly spell, let alone know their meaning. However, the spellers were brilliant; they spelled words such as idiocracy, chassis, bougainvillea, camembert and budgerigar right.

It took the judges six rounds to get the top 10 who will proceed to the East African competitions that will take place in Kenya in December.

After getting the top 10, the judges then sought to get the best three. The words got harder in each round.

Eventually, Micheal Mwesigwa from Kampala Quality Primary School was named winner; Priscilla Namono from Mbale Tower Primary School, first runner up; and Wilfred Wolimbwa of Victory Border Point Primary School, Malaba, second runner-up. The winners walked away with various prizes including a flat screen TV, a full solar system worth Shs300,000; a visit to the State House and other prizes.