

# Budaka school struggles to shelter pupils from rainfall

**Conditions.** The school has only 37 desks and 10 teachers for 700 pupils.

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**BUDAKA.** Although the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) increased pupils' enrolment in the various government schools across the country, the teaching and learning process in the schools has been affected by numerous challenges.

Many UPE schools in rural areas face challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of learning aids and facilities, high pupil teacher ratios among others.

Pupils of Wairagala Primary School in Budaka District have not been any lucky as they are subjected to the vagaries of weather such as strong winds, heavy rain and scorching sunshine when attending lessons due to lack of classrooms.

Despite such challenges, the school has pupils in the candidate classes who compete with those from urban schools as they are subjected to the same examinations at national level.

The facility, which was established as a community school in the early 1935 and taken over by the government in 2011, has only two classrooms, which partly serve as staffroom, store, kitchen, library and headteacher's office.

With a pupil population of 711, the school has only 10 teachers.

For the last seven years, several pupils of Wairagala Primary School have been sitting on the floor, others studying under tree shades and temporary-leaking structures as the government is yet to construct classrooms.

The parents through joint efforts have only managed to improvise by constructing papyrus



**Structure.** Pupils of Wairagala Primary School in Budaka District attend a lesson under a makeshift structure last week. PHOTO BY MUDANGHA KOLYANGHA

makeshift structures and papyrus mats for the learners to sit on as there are only 37 desks.

The headmaster, Mr Gustine Kasolo, says such deplorable conditions among others have affected the academic performance of pupils.

"Our academic performance is appalling not because we are ineffective but due to the conditions under which we operate," he says.

He adds: "We usually close early especially when it is threatening to rain because there is no proper shelter at the school."

In the 2017 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), out of 28 registered candidates, none passed in Division One and only four passed in Division Two and 11 got Division Three.

Mr Kasolo attributes the declining academic performance in the PLE to the poor staffing and lack of proper learning facilities at the school.

"We will continue to register declining performance every year as a result of government's slow approach to providing a good teaching environment," he says. Mr Isaac Kyamati, a teacher at the school, notes that there is need for urgent government intervention if the school is to register any success.

The school management com-

mittee chairperson, Mr David Mubale, says there is need to improve hygiene and sanitation at the school as the facility has no pit-latrines.

"The existing pit-latrines are full and it is being shared by both pupils and teachers which exposes them to the risk of contracting diseases," he says.

Mr Mubale says they have contacted the district leadership several times as regards emptying the pit latrine but their efforts have proved futile.

Mr Sam Mulomi, the district chairman, says they intend to construct a classroom block and a pit-latrines, in the 2018/2019 financial year. "We are aware of the challenges but this goes with finances. The moment funds trickle in, we shall definitely address these issues," he says.

The district education officer, Mr Paul Higenyi, reiterated that the state under the pupils is studying is deplorable and needs urgent intervention.

## THE GOVT PLANS

Mr Higenyi says the ministry of Education had listed the school as one of the beneficiaries under World Bank project for the construction of classrooms but the proposal was later abandoned under unclear circumstances. He, however, says as district, they are engaging concerned authorities at the ministry to revamp the school.

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### Shs6.4b budget passed

**KAMULI.** Kamuli Municipal Council last week passed a Shs6.4b budget for the 2018/2019 Financial Year amidst a boycott from the mayor and his executive. Mr David Musasizi and his officers' efforts to frustrate the exercise turned futile after councillors insisted and passed the budget saying they were 'tired of political wars affecting

### Police probe death

**IGANGA.** Police in Iganga District are investigating circumstances under which a body of unidentified male was dumped in the middle of a road in Buniro-Bukose Village, Nawanningi Sub-county on Saturday. Police say the body which appeared fresh bore no noticeable injuries. The Busoga East police spokes-

### Man commits suicide

**BUIKWE.** A 52-year-old man in Buikwe District at the weekend committed suicide after allegedly being denied sex by his wife. Joseph Ojur, a resident of Kabagu Zone in Njeru Municipality, was allegedly denied his sexual rights after he revealed that he tested positive for HIV/Aids. According to the Njeru Divisional Commissioner, Mr Christopher