

UPDATE



The Speaker of Parliament Hon Rebecca Kadaga speaking to members of UNAPD and SIA after they presented to her a petition calling on government to put in place appropriate interventions to reduce accidents. She also toured Mulago Spinal Injury Ward as part of the activities to mark the international Road Safety Awareness Campaign (see pictorial on page 6).

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EDITORIAL



George W. Kiyingi
Executive Director

I welcome you to this second edition of our newsletter this year. I wish to begin by appreciating the media that have greatly supported us to further our advocacy efforts especially as regards cerebral palsy (CP) and acquired brain injury (ABI). We held a press conference where the media did not only attend but filed news stories that were published or aired on many TV and radio stations as well as news-

papers. Many media houses also offered us free airtime to create awareness and about CP and ABI, that, according to our survey, are the leading cause of physical disability nowadays. I implore you members to read much about CP and ABI to avoid bearing children with these conditions.

We have brought two great inspirational stories from teachers. One is a degree graduate teacher who has taught from a tricycle for 37 years and realized great achievements. The other is a primary teacher who lacks a tricycle to ease his movement to school but has his special way of coping up.

If you don't have a leg(s), or you have them but they are weak, or you have any other disability, this does not stop you from playing sports. Our members in Mubende showcased their sports talents at the tournament organized by UNAPD. Many people watched in disbelief as persons with disabilities exhibited their sportsmanship.

We joined with Spinal Injury Association (SIA) to celebrate the International Road Safety Awareness Week. More than 270 000 pedestrians lose their lives on the world's roads each year (2000 in Uganda), and many more who survive death don't survive acquiring disabilities such as spinal injuries, brain injuries, amputations, and broken bones, among others. About 200 members of SIA and UNAPD gathered at Parliament and handed over a petition to the Speaker, calling on Government to put in place measure to reduce disability through prevention of road accidents.

UNAPD also held the first ever conference on accessibility where several stakeholders participated and brainstormed about issues of disability and accessibility with special focus on access to education. We intend to make the conference an annual activity. The Minister of Education, who was the guest of honour also launched our new project aimed at improve access to buildings in Kampala. We are grateful to DRF who support this activity.

You will read details of these and more herein. I wish you a nice reading.

KCCA spot on boda bodas

Reports from Mulago indicate that the hospital is overwhelmed by the number of people who die of brain injuries as a result of boda-boda accidents. The hospital management is concerned that much of the hospital's annual budget and doctors' time are spent on surgery and treating of crash victims. In fact, more than a half (62.5%) of Mulago surgery budget goes on victims of crashes. This translates to 15% of the entire hospital's meager annual budget.

Many reports quote Dr. Micheal Edgar Muhumuza, a consultant neurosurgeon, as saying that a half the number of accidents victims who die, die of brain injury as a result of trauma (insult) to the head. Treating injuries resulting from motorcycle accidents that are otherwise avoidable or preventable costs the Government more than Shs.1.5 billion per year.

Reports indicate that if surgery is done for severe head injuries within three hours, the mortality rate is less than 30%, but if it is done after three hours, mortality rate is more than 90%. Many people particularly boda boda cyclists are attacked by assailants and are usually seen the following day when it is too late to save them. Others get accidents very far from hospitals and it is too late for the medical experts to save their lives by the time the victims reach hospitals.

Mulago has only 26 orthopaedic surgeons and four neural surgeons (instead of the desired 10) to handle accident cases. The country loses two bodaboda accidents victims per day from Mulago alone. The deaths are not only caused by an increased inflow of accident victims but also a shortage of specialised doctors to carry out surgery on the victims.

We welcome efforts by KCCA and Police to register and regulate boda boda cyclist operating in the city. They indeed offer an important service to the countrymen but really a menace to the country. Many districts have even opened 'bajaji wards' in their hospital where only victims of accidents related to boda bodas are admitted. Boda bodas are disabling and killing many more people than the vehicles.

The Police introduced regulations requiring all boda boda cyclists and their passengers to wear helmets but enforcement has miserably failed. Studies show that helmet use reduces death as a result of accidents by 42% and severe injury by 69%.

So we have to wear helmets to save our lives, drive and walk carefully on the roads. The cost of a helmet is far cheaper than being hospitalized, disabled or death at worst.

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The eight action points to reduce disability



**By Arthur Blick Sn.
Chairman UNAPD**

UNAPD held a press conference aimed at reducing cases of Cerebral Palsy (CP) and Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) by sensitizing the masses through the mass media. Below is the Chairman's statement to the media where he proposed eight action points that have to be done to reduce the impact of CP and ABI.

I am greatly honoured to be speaking in front of you about this pertinent issue of disability. You are aware that polio which disabled many people in Uganda during the 70s and 80s is now no longer a big threat to the country as it has been largely contained through immunization and sensitization. However, many Ugandans are becoming more disabled than before with the latest findings of the Uganda National Household Survey 2009/2010 indicating that 16% of Ugandans have a certain form of disability. This is more than double the number that was captured in the results of the 2002 National Housing and Population Census that put it at 7%.

CP and ABI are now the main causes of disability according to UNAPD's findings. CP and ABI have been described internationally as "silent epidemic" because their public recognition is extremely low despite the staggering number of people who get brain injuries each year. Worldwide, the incidence of CP is 1 in 500 births. In Uganda we refer to CP and ABI as the "the new polio in Uganda" though their effects to an individual are much more severe than for a polio survivor.

Results of our survey in 36 districts indicates that the majority of people with physical disability were disabled by polio (50.1%) followed by CP (5%) and ABI (3.35%). Others were disabled by accidents, landmines, guns, injections and high blood pressure, among others. The survey involved 3905 participants, and covered the districts including eleven in the East, nine in Central, eight in North and eight in the Western part of the country. It was progressively carried out between 2008 to 2012. This survey considered only registered members of UNAPD and did not reach out to every household or person with disability.

In 2008-2009, UNAPD also implemented a project where we identified and supported 144 children and families of children with CP and ABI in only six parishes from two divisions of Kampala (Kawempe and Makindye). This is a very big number of children from such a small area but enough to prove that the problem of CP and ABI is great and needs immediate attention.

We are concerned that many more people are becoming disabled by preventable conditions like CP and ABI yet cases of disability would be reducing as the country develops. It is polio which massively disabled people but since it was contained through sensitization and immunization, the number

of polio survivors is reducing by the day as they die without "replacement", so we would expect the number of PWDs to be reducing.

Government has rightly put a lot of efforts on polio but neglected fighting other causes of disability like CP, ABI, and road accidents, among others. We ask the government to reconsider its strategy on preventing disabling conditions if the country is to keep on a steady path to development. CP and ABI for example result in an impairment of cognitive abilities or physical functioning of a person. They can also result in the disturbance of behavioral or emotional functioning.

If the people with these conditions are not well managed coupled with thorough rehabilitation, the country will lose a lot as they may not grow into productive citizens and they will keep their families in dire poverty hence very poor living conditions. Disability affects not only the individual, but also the family, close friends, coworkers and other social networks of the individual. Roles and relationships change. The financial ramifications may be extensive.

Here below we propose eight action points that the Government, Development Partners and other stakeholders have to do if the country is to reduce or manage cases of CP and ABI:

I thank the media for always honouring our invitations and helping us to promote awareness about disability. Effective sensitization of communities through the mass media is one of the most effective way to reduce or manage disability.

How to reduce CP and ABI

1. Ministry of Health should develop a CP and ABI Register that should be the source of data to support research in monitoring rates of these conditions, identifying interventions that can effectively improve quality of life of people with CP and ABI.
2. Deployment of physiotherapists, occupational therapists and speech therapies at health centre IIIs. I.e. in each sub-county.
3. Improving delivery and use of maternal health services. Each health centre should have a functional ambulance to transport expectant mothers in case of any emergency.
4. Provision of common and effective drugs used to manage the effects associated with CP and ABI such as epileptic seizures at all health centre IIIs.
5. Massive sensitization of people especially women on good feeding, avoiding self-medication and regular visiting of qualified medical personnel for prenatal and antenatal services
6. Eradication of malaria through provision of free and proper use of mosquito nets to each expectant mother and every child after birth. This will eradicate cases of cerebral malaria (meningitis) that causes ABI.
7. Reducing of road accidents more especially boda-boda accidents through promoting safe driving and improvement of the roads.
8. Preventing use of intoxicating substances like cocaine, marijuana, and drinking of too much alcohol, especially by expectant mothers.

Minister applauds UNAPD over Standards

BY HAMAD LUBWAMA

"I want to applaud UNAPD for spearheading the development of the National Accessibility Standards to guide architects, constructors and property developers on how to design and construct facilities that can be easily used by all people including persons with disabilities.

"I am also aware that UNAPD is now lobbying Parliament to make the Accessibility Standards part of the Building Control Act whose Bill is now under scrutiny by the Physical Infrastructure Committee of Parliament.

"I pledge my support to include the Accessibility Standards in the Bill because if passed and implemented, will go a long way to enforce improved accessibility in schools and other sectors. If schools are made accessible, school dropout as a result on poor design of the school infrastructure will greatly reduce."

These were the words from the Minister for Education Jessica Alupo in a speech read for her by the Commissioner for Special Needs, Negris Onen, at the national conference on accessibility held in February.

The conference was organised by UNAPD at Hotel Africana where the minister launched the Accessibility Improvement Project and also commissioned the National Accessibility Audit Team.

"I want you to note that it is not the schools alone that should be accessible because persons with disability also have

to go to hospitals, churches, workplaces, recreation centres, among others," she said. "It is not only persons with disability who benefit from accessible physical environment but all people. So let us all strive to make all places accessible right from our homes."

In 2012, UNAPD carried out a baseline survey in Masaka and Kapchorwa districts on the state of accessibility and enrolment of children with disability in schools. It was found that many children with disability are not going to schools because of inaccessibility to school buildings, lack of special needs teachers, stigmatization from fellow pupils and teachers, neglect by parents/guardians, among others.

"I am happy to assure the participants that this Government put in place relevant regulations, Acts and strategies to ensure that services for persons with disability are provided in line with national and international standards," the minister said and enumerated the interventions.

She however said the Government is facing many challenges to effectively serve the PWDs and appreciated the support from stakeholders.

"Government has welcomed and recognized other stakeholders' interventions such as Civil Society Organisations like Uganda National Action on Physical Disability that have come up to support Government in this area. Most of these are actively involved in advocacy, promoting inclusive education practices and spearheading the campaign for improved physical accessibility. We greatly appreciate this contribution," she noted.

Nebbi to start making wheel chairs, celebrate IDD

Beginning this year, persons with disability will have some time off together to reflect on the past as well as their future as the district starts to celebrate the International Day for Persons with Disability (IDD).

The pledge was made by the district's Deputy Chief Administrative Officer Mark Tivu as he officiated at the closure of a training workshop for UNAPD members in the district.

The promise followed a submission by UNAPD Board member Fabiano Opira who had complained that Nebbi is one of the few districts in Uganda that does not celebrate the day. He also complained that the revenue and RDCs offices in the district are not accessible.

"We celebrate many other international days. Why not IDD? I will work with you (Opira) to organize this day starting with this year," Tivu, who represented the district chairperson Robert Okumu said.

Tivu handed over materials from UNAPD for making beads and clothes to groups involved in tailoring and bead-making as their start-up capital. He also handed over a tricycle donated by Harriet Nakibirango to one of the members.

Tivu was irked when he was informed that the tricycle costs about 600,000/=.

"I have critically looked at the materials used to make this tricycle. It is not very different from that used to make bicycles. A bicycle costs 200,000=, why does a tricycle cost that much yet they are made for people who are disadvantaged and poor?" he wondered.

"I am going to make sure that we start a fabrication workshop here in Nebbi where wheel chairs and tricycles will be produced," Tivu said, attracting applause from the participants.

The West Nile Private Sector facilitated the training organized by UNAPD where participants were trained in records, book keeping and group dynamics.

"Trainings give you skills to become self-sufficient. If you make good beads like I have seen, I am very sure that you will get market," Tivu assured the PWDs. "I believe that you are more disciplined than other people. People have negative attitudes against you but it is your duty to prove that you are as good as them by being productive."

DRF boosts accessibility advocacy

UNAPD has received funding from the Disability Rights Fund (DRF) to support the organization improve the accessibility state in Kampala district.

The project called Accessibility Improvement Project in Kampala was commissioned by the Minister for Education Jesca Alupo in February. The one-year project worth U.S. \$16,000, aims to improve the state of physical accessibility to private and public buildings in Kampala.

Under the project, UNAPD will make a survey to establish the state of accessibility in Kampala based on the Accessibility Standards. The survey findings will be used for advocacy and to lobby for the inclusion of the Accessibility Standards in the Building Control Act. A professional engineer or architect will be hired to make this survey. Many of the buildings in the capital are not accessible to PWDs yet it is where services needed by all people are offered.



I convey greetings from the Finance Department of UNAPD to all our esteemed readers especially the members who are the major target for this article.

This is the first time I am communicating to you using this forum and in every edition, I will have something "financial" to tell you. I have physically met with many of you especially those in the districts where the Membership Empowerment Project is implemented.

I met you during the trainings of the district associations in UNAPD's financial guidelines, records keeping and accountability. The trainings were aimed at ensuring that members are able to apply for money from UNAPD to implement activities on their own and be able to account for the same very well.

I am impressed that all the 12 projects districts managed to make good work plans, applied for money, received, use it and have accounted for it. However, some of the districts have not been able to account for the funds very well basing on our accountability standards.

We understand that for some of the associations, this is the first time they have received and accounted for the money so we didn't expect you to score 100%. We shall continue to give you the necessary support until you catch up. However, there is some acceptable mark you should score below which we cannot give you more money until you fully account for the previous funds very well.

With great pleasure, we would wish to appreciate Kiboga, Kitgum, Bushenyi and Kisoro districts. They have used their funds very well and have excelled in making good

MONEY MATTERS with DEO KINTU



accountabilities. These districts make good work plans and also submit full and well organized accountabilities. Yes, you have performed very well but again haven't scored 100%. This means that you also have some further improvements to make. One key thing to making a good accountability is to keep your financial records very well such as receipts, attendance forms, payment vouchers, invoices and acknowledgement forms.

I call upon other districts to emulate Kiboga, Kitgum, Kisoro and Bushenyi. Begin with revising the financial guidelines manual that we gave you during the trainings so as to improve on your records keeping and accountability. If you don't, those districts will get more trust fund money than you.

To our members in the districts involved in income generating activities, I want to encourage you to always keep records of your businesses. For example records of incomes and expenditures. You should ensure that cash books and balance sheets are kept. This will help you to monitor the progress of your businesses. It will also help you to access financial services like small loans in order to boost your businesses. Financial services providers have to assess your financial records before they give you loans. We are ready to help the members who wish to get knowledge and skills of preparing all the necessary books of accounts. Call any time for guidance.

The Finance Department wishes to appreciate all our partners for all the financial and technical support you have given us to enable us support our members.



Hon Kadaga (L) reading the petition as Hon. Alex Ndeezi and Hellen Asamo who represent PWDs look on

UNAPD with Spinal Injury Association presented a petition to the Speaker of Parliament Hon Rebecca Kadaga, calling on government to reduce road accidents. It was noted that accidents are one of the leading causes of disability in Uganda as they lead to amputation, spinal and brain injuries. This was during the Road Safety Awareness Week. The handing over of the petition was at Parliament where many PWDs attended.



Hon Sofia Nalule



Hon Nokrach chats with SIAs Angela Balala and Mylen



Some of these PWDs were disabled by accidents. They attended the ceremony to lobby Parliament to make government design appropriate interventions to reduce road accidents thus reducing disabilities caused by accidents.





In January, UNAPD organised a sports tournament in Mubende where the organisation is implementing a sports project. Four teams participated in the one day event held at the Mayor's Gardens. The members and spectators enjoyed the game of sitting volleyball as **HAMAD LUBWAMA** reports with the camera (see story and more pictures of page 12).



AISP: Sign language teachers trained, community outreaches held...



Vincent L. Kafeero
Project Officer

Our esteemed readers, I thank you for all efforts you are doing to uplift the standards of living of People with Disabilities (PWDs) in general and Children with Disabilities (CWDs) in particular. I must say that you highly complement the work of UNAPD.

This year we have continued to carry out activities aimed at improving CWDs access to schools and services. The following is an update from the Accessible and Inclusive Schools for CWDs Project.

A team comprising of staff, CWDs and their parents participated in activities to commemorate World AIDS Day in Rakai district under the theme “re-engaging more PWDs for effective HIV Prevention”. Advocacy was made to target more CWDs in delivery of HIV/AIDS services.

Project beneficiaries also joined the rest of the disability fraternity to mark the International Day for PWDs at Kati Kati grounds in Kampala and in Kayunga district where a number of PWDs and well wishers converged to showcase their abilities and solidarity to disability and development.

During these events, UNAPD staged an exhibition about accessibility and Accessibility Standards and urged the public to use the Standards to create a barrier-free physical environment, an enormous pre-condition to improving the lives of PWDs.

A national conference on accessibility in relation to inclusive education was held at Hotel Africana in Kampala. This created awareness on accessibility rights, issues and abilities of CWDs. The conference was graced by Minister of Education and Sports, Minister of State for Elderly and Disability Affairs, Members of Parliament representing PWDs, Government technocrats, and representatives of Civil Society and professional Organizations, PWDs, the media and the public at large. The conference enabled various stakeholders to share ways of extending advocacy beyond the target population. At this conference, UNAPD also disseminated a survey report on the situation of accessibility and enrollment of CWDs in schools. The report further revealed that CWDs are not adequately benefiting from education due to lack of accessible facilities in schools.

UNAPD in partnership with Masaka district local government have constructed an accessible water borne toilet at the district headquarters. This will serve as a model for all constructors, builders and property developers who

wish to construct accessible toilet facilities for PWDs.

In partnership with Uganda National Association of the Deaf, 10 teachers from Masaka and Kapchorwa were trained in sign language interpretation in order to be able to appropriately handle deaf children in their pursuit to access their right to education. Teachers acquired basic sign language skills and each was awarded a certificate of attendance. This enhanced partnership with UNAD and district education offices of Kapchorwa and Masaka.

Community Outreaches have been conducted to families of CWDs where challenges and experiences were shared and appropriate advice was given. Also the life style of individual households with a CWD were assessed and offered tailored advice and psychosocial support to the family. You are all encouraged to support CWDs so that they can live dignified lives.

In future, we plan to conduct more community outreaches and experience sharing meetings to offer psychosocial support to the family of CWDs. We further plan to train PWDs in advocacy for inclusion, practical accessibility auditing, give out more trust fund to carry out advocacy activities at the district level an braille elementary education materials. Other activities are participating in national and international events aimed at raising the profile of the child, holding radio and TV talk shows, publishing articles on raising awareness on accessibility rights, issues and abilities of CWDs. We also plan to holding sensitization meetings on disability and human rights for teachers and school owners, and monitoring the progress of project.

We are doing something to ensure that CWDs access education; What about you?



MPs Sofia Nanongo, Hellen Asamo consult with UNAPD vice chairperson Elizabeth Kayanga (R) at the conference.

The teacher who carries his books with his mouth

BY DENIS AYO

I was born alone in Lyanyi village, Loro sub-county, Oyam District. My parents died when I was still too young. This made my going to school too hard since I did not have someone to take care of all my domestic and school requirements. I am not even sure how my disability came about because none of my parents lived to tell me the story. Both of my legs are crippled and paralysed and I therefore cannot stand or walk.

It is my grandfather who struggled and raised me up. He endured to educate me at a nearby primary school which was one kilometer away from home. I crawled to and from school every day since I had no wheel chair or tricycle. At school, my classmates stigmatized, discriminated and abused me because of my disability but I stood all the insults and did not drop out of school.

I needed to acquire an education that I knew could liberate me in future. My efforts started paying off when I successfully finished my Primary Seven in 2005 at Lyanyi Primary School, scoring a First Grade with aggregate 11 in PLE. I was so delighted because I even performed better than so many able-bodied children who used to laugh at me.

My good performance and determination to succeed attracted the attention of Loro Sub-county administration that awarded me a bursary to study Ordinary Level at Loro S.S.S. This further motivated me to read hard and scored a second grade, with aggregate 39. But then I was worried that this was the end of the road for me because my bursary ended here.

However, with my zeal and determination, I stormed the office of the principal of Loro Core Primary and Teachers College and explained to him my problems. Simon Odwilo allowed me to pursue the teaching course for free at his college. He even provided me with the necessary study materials. I successfully managed to complete my two-year course in 2011 and was awarded a Grade III Teaching Certificate.

I secured my first job in a private school, Kampalata Nursery and Primary School in Loro Sub-county, Oyam district where I earn a little salary of 80,000/= per month. This money is not enough to take care of myself and my old and ailing grandfather who struggled to raise me up.



When Denis Ayo fails to get one of his pupils to help him carry his books to and from school, he carries them by his mouth

I crawl to school every day because I cannot afford to save about 600,000/= out of my meager salary to buy a tricycle to ease my movement. I prefer a tricycle to a wheelchair because it is more convenient as it can reach places where a wheel chair cannot. I can also use it to do some businesses.

I was so much delighted when I heard about UNAPD from Josephine Abok, a concerned parent and a Community Mobilizer of Oyam Action on Physical Disability in Oyam District. This is our organization of PWDs where we can advocate for our rights, share challenges and experiences. UNAPD has through this newsletter given me the opportunity to share my life experience with you.

I kindly ask UNAPD or any other organization or individual to help get me a tricycle so that I could move to school and class with dignity instead of crawling. I carry my books using my mouth but with a tricycle, I would just put them on a carrier and ride off.

Thank you UNAPD. You are a pain reliever to people with physical disabilities.



Denied Medicine because of disability

His parents carried him to school for all his primary education because he could not walk. His ambition was to become a medical doctor but he was advised against his will because of his disability. However, as HAMAD LUBWAMA reports, Peter Okitera eventually became a teacher, struggled to get married and doesn't regret.



Being in a wheel chair doesn't stop Okitera from writing on the blackboard



Through out is career, Okitera has never faced any stigmatization from his students but instead love his subjects

Q. How did you get the disability?

A. I was born in June 1951 when I was normal but got the disability when I was still very young. I cannot remember how it came but my parents told me that I got a fever that left both of my legs paralysed (very weak) and unable to walk. It was polio that caused my disability.

Many schools are inaccessible to PWDs. How did you manage to cope up with them when you are using a wheel chair?

I had an ambition. I wanted to prove that I could make it in spite of my disability, so I did not let anything block my way. I studied from Kidoko Primary School, Bukedi College, Kings College Buddo and Makerere University where I got a degree in education.

My parents carried me to school every day during my primary education because I had no assistive device. At school, I crawled. I got my first wheel chair when I joined secondary school. My classrooms were not in storied buildings except the dormitories. There were some small steps but I could crawl over them. In storied dormitories like in Lumumba Hall (Makerere), I was allocated one of the rooms on the ground floor that was accessible. The physics laboratory and my lecture rooms at Makerere were also on the ground floor – even up to now.

Why did you pick interest in teaching?

One of my senior brothers was a mechanical engineer but I did not want to be like him. My ambition was to become a doctor like one of my cousins. However, my parents and head teacher (Ian Robinson) at Buddo College who was a Briton discouraged me from doing medicine. They said that the work of a doctor would be so difficult for me because of my disability. They chose for me to do education and I became a teacher. I was a successful teacher and I don't regret.

How was it easy for you a person with a disability in a wheel chair to find a job?

I got three jobs before I left the university in 1975. I was posted to three schools: Bukedi College (Tororo), Makerere College Kampala) and Jinja Girls School. All the head teachers of these schools wanted me. We were very few teachers qualified to teach my subjects: physics and mathematics but I chose Bukedi College because I was an OB. Since then schools have just been fighting for me because my work has been making the students understand and pass my subjects. I have also taught in Majansi High School and Tororo Girls School from where I retired in 2011. In both of these schools, I was the head of the physics department. I taught for 37 years (1975-2011).

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but has greatly excelled in teaching

How did you manage to teach from a wheel chair?

I designed a tricycle that was suitable for me. I gave my specifications to a fabricator in a workshop in Jinja who made it for me. This was in 1975 but I still have it up to now. It is a small tricycle adapted to my height. It can also enter through any door.

Many PWDs are stigmatized and discriminated in society. How did you handle these challenges at school?

I cannot really say that I faced any specific challenges apart from the general challenges of little pay for teachers. My salary was not enough to maintain my family (of six children and wife) well, pay for my helpers and maintain my tricycle. I missed trips and tours because the schools could not make special arrangements for me.

Didn't the students disrespect you because of your disability...?

In whichever school I went, students doubted me at first. They were curious and wondering whether a disabled man like me could teach them very well from a wheelchair but whenever I started teaching, they were surprised to the extent that they liked my subjects the more. Some people say that mathematics and physics are hard subjects but my students did not find these subjects hard. They were encouraged to do the subjects because, if I, in spite of disability, offered and passed these subjects, why not them?

What are your greatest achievements?

I have been happily married to Joyce Apadet Okitera for the last 35 years. We have produced nine children since then but three passed on. I have raised and educated all the remaining six. Three have graduated from Makerere, two in high schools and the other is a clinical officer. I have a shop, a house and a commercial plot of land in Tororo Municipality.

How did you meet your wife?

I met her in the school where my father Tanga Osunueri was a head master. This was in 1978 after my graduation from Makerere. She was in Senior Four. I and my family thought the next thing I had to do after university was to get married and have a family. My father met her family and there was some initial resistance.

So it was not easy to get her?

Yes! It was not easy. Some of her family members discouraged her saying that a man like me could not keep her and could not have children. We told them that since I was successful in education, I would also be successful in marriage. I had opened a shop in town and they were further convinced when we told them that she would run the shop as I teach. The parents finally accepted and I paid dowry according to our custom. Ours is a customary marriage. She has been running the shop since our marriage and she also grows food for the family.

Has she ever regretted marrying you?

We have been pairing very well. In fact, she has told me on several occasions that I am more capable than some other able-bodied men she dated before our marriage. We have never had any major problems in our marriage and we have never had any separation. She has been so supportive to me. I have done my best and we have been able to progress. She is proud of me because I am popular. I was a councilor at the district for 10 years and I am holding other leadership positions in the disability movement. I go with her for workshops in Kampala where I also meet and talk with several Members of Parliament, fellow councillors and prominent district officials. She is comfortable with me.

What has been your best moment with her?

We have had two best moments. First is when I took her to Makerere University for our first daughter's graduation (Esther Shaggy Awuyo). We also attended together our second daughter's graduation from Uganda Christian University. The other best moment was when we bought a piece of land in Tororo Municipality.

How are you surviving after retiring? Have you started to receive pension?

I have not been having a salary since I retired in 2011. Surviving is very difficult. I wish I retired early because then you could get your benefits right away. Now the process takes so long. I submitted all the necessary documents but moving my file from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Public Service is a big war. I do not know how long it will take.

What is your plan for the future?

I want all my children to graduate. I should have a good, complete and organised residence. I also want to have a commercial building. I have some business but I want to concentrate on it and develop it. I was a councillor and represented persons with disability in Tororo district for 10 years but I was pushed out by a legislation that barred public servants from being councillors. Now that I am retired, I will go back to active politics and also be active in the disability movement.



Okitera with teachers of Tororo Town College

Excitement as UNAPD holds sports tourney in Mubende



Mubende District Chairman Kibuuka Amooti handing over the trophy to Mubende Rehabilitation Centre sitting volleyball team captain



Bukuya and Kasanda sitting volleyball teams in a group photo

BY OPOTI SCHOLASTICA

The long awaited sitting volleyball tournament was all what persons with physical disabilities in Mubende district longed for as it was their first time to take part in a sports competition. All they wanted was the feel of playing with another team and showcasing all the volleyball skills they had acquired since UNAPD started a sports project in the district.

The tournament attracted four teams from three project subcounties including one from Bukuya, Kasanda, Mubende Town Council (MTC) and Mubende Rehabilitation Center (MRC).

The participants were not only excited with the game but also with lots of food and drinks, prizes. And for many fans drawn from the subcounties, it was their first time to come to Mubende town.

The competitions where MRC emerged champions after defeating MTC was also unique in its kind as it attracted not only a mixture of both female and male youths but adults alike.

The district chairperson Kibuuka Amooti witnessed the final match and handed over the trophy and other prizes to the participants.

He said he was so excited with the PWDs sports and asked the leadership of Mubende District Persons with Physical Disability Association (MUDPA) to contact him for possible support from the district.

The players exhibited good talent and the losing teams promised to go back and train harder for the next tournament later this year.

The tournament that started at 11:00am at the Mayors Gardens attracted spectators from the town and the participating subcounties who came to cheer on the teams.

Ole Ansbjerg from the Disabled Sports Association Denmark that supports the project witnessed part of the tournament.

Also in attendance were officials from Uganda Paralympic Committee, Uganda Sitting Volleyball Association, Standing Volleyball Coach Joseph Katera who facilitated the tournament, PWDs councilors from Mubende, and UNAPD staff.