

School feeding program reduces absenteeism at Omugenya Odela Primary School

According to Madam Atim Janet, a 53-year-old Headteacher, Omugenya Odela Primary School is an 85-year-old school. It is found in Orapada Village-Gweri Parish-Gweri Subcounty-Soroti District; 30 kilometers away from the centre of Soroti City. Madam Atim Janet said that the school was started in 1940 as a church community school. Children enrolled to study but that the school collapsed only to be reinstated in 1990. During the interview on 21/01/2025, the school had 1,298 learners i.e., 628 boys and 670 girls.

“Before the ‘Community Empowerment’, testified the headteacher, “Omugenya Odela Primary School did not have any school feeding Programme because the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) was reluctant to contribute money for ploughing and buying seed; the attitude of parents did not favor school feeding, unfettered animals could destroy school gardens, the boundaries of the school land were not clear, some parents did not want their children to do garden work; drought often affected yields. The school was often unable to buy hoes for gardening. In some instances, food grown in the gardens would be stolen by unknown people. All these occurrences discouraged parents from embarking on the school feeding programme.

Teso Initiative for Peace through the ‘Community Empowerment project’ advocated for school feeding by sensitizing parents during the PTA Annual General Meeting (AGM). TIP as well trained the SMC and PTA members on their roles and responsibilities. The project continued visiting the school to check on progress of hygiene and sanitation activities. The school feeding had not yet started. This continued advocacy motivated her to meet the School Management Committee whom she convinced to give school gardening a second chance. The School Management Committee allocated 2 acres of land for the school feeding program and the PTA allocated money for ploughing. Teso Initiative for Peace gave maize, beans, eggplants and cowpeas seed. Although the maize yields were affected by drought during the first season, there was at least a harvest of 2 bags (200kgs; the beans yielded 3 basins, eggplants and cowpeas as well did well. The children planted potatoes and cassava to diversify their crop types.

The above efforts enabled the school to launch the feeding program during term two of 2024 using sweet potatoes and in term 3 2024 using boiled maize. At the time of compiling this story, the school garden had cassava for second season. Enrolment increased from 1064 to 1298, absenteeism and escape by children reduced. “Now that the feeding program is on the ground, absenteeism is reducing and school’s mark stones are therefore set,” submitted the joyous Atim Janet.

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☒ Yes

ATIM JANET

☐ No

The above story was compiled by Mr. Etengu Raymond, the Agriculture Field Officer of Teso Initiative for Peace (TIP), an indigenous NGO in Uganda following an interview with Atim Janet on 21/1/2025. Mr. Etengu Raymond can be contacted on tel. +256 786 85 0592.