

Schools should be their neighbours' keeper

In many Ugandan communities, we often speak of schools as if they exist on an island — separate from the daily struggles, health challenges, and sanitation realities around them. Yet every day, teachers walk the same roads as residents.

The boundaries between school and community have never truly existed. For example, at Kitebi Secondary School, it is not just a learning institution; it is the heart of a community. And when the heart is weak, the whole body suffers.

This is why I have always believed that the success of a school is inseparable from the wellbeing of the community around it.

Our recent projects — a community garbage collection facility and a fully equipped



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mobile ambulance — were not born out of comfort, but out of necessity, pain and responsibility.

We once lost a teacher after a desperate night-time search for transport and it shook us deeply. It exposed a reality we could no longer afford to ignore: a community without timely medical support is one accident away from avoidable loss. Instead of simply mourning, we chose to act.

In my personal capacity, I turned to friends and well-wishers beyond our borders, sharing the story of our community and the urgent need for solutions.

Their generosity brought us a modern mobile clinic valued at about sh300m — equipped with ICU-grade tools, staffed by mobile clinicians and capable of reaching homes. It

is not just an ambulance; it is a promise that no member of our community should die because help arrived too late.

The same spirit drove the lobbying for a community garbage collection facility. Every educator knows that sanitation is not a luxury — it directly affects learning, attendance, health and dignity.

A school cannot flourish in a community wrestling with waste. So we sought a solution that would uplift both the school and the residents of Kitebi.

These projects, though stationed at Kitebi Secondary School, do not serve the school alone. They belong to the people — students, teachers,

market vendors, bodaboda riders, parents and every neighbour who calls this place home.

And this is the lesson: When schools and communities work hand in hand, challenges become shared and solutions become possible. It is easy to praise innovation, but what we need in this country is collaboration. Schools must not fear stepping beyond their gates and communities must not view schools as distant institutions. We breathe the same air; we face the same risks; we share the same hope for a healthier, more dignified tomorrow.

The garbage truck we unveiled will clean more than just the

school grounds.

The medical van will save more than just students. These initiatives remind us that education does not happen only in classrooms. A safe, healthy and united community is the first syllabus every child encounters.

My dream is that what we have done in Kitebi becomes a model for Kampala and Uganda. Let every school look around and ask: What challenge can we help solve? What future can we build together? And let every community see its nearby school not as a fenced-off compound, but as a partner in progress. When schools and communities move together, everyone thrives.

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