

NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

WE BRING THE WORLD TO YOUR CLASSROOM



Children's Platform

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

Why child labour is dangerous to us

VIEWES FROM AWACH CENTRAL P/S, GULU



Derrick: Child labour leads to school dropouts.



Irene: Child labour results in defilement and early marriages.

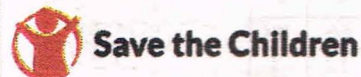
SAVE OUR PLANET

New Vision, in partnership with Save the Children, is running a campaign to sensitise the public on the causes of climate change and the measures for mitigation and adaptation. All children in primary school are invited to participate in a writing and drawing/painting competition.



To enter the climate change competition, write a poem or article, or draw/paint a picture that gives a message about climate change and caring for the environment. The written piece should not exceed 200 words.

Prizes to win include school backpacks, readers and textbooks. Send your poem or drawing to nie@newvision.co.ug or by WhatsApp to 0782769574/0705407920.



SAY NO TO CHILD LABOUR

BY GEORGE BITA

Every child deserves a childhood, not a workload," says Kevin Mubuuke, a senior child protection specialist at Save the Children International.

She adds that child labour steals dreams, education, and health, trapping children in cycles of poverty and abuse.

Although the labour law dictates that no child shall be involved in any employment that affects their education, some children work at construction sites, mining zones, markets and plantations.

The anti-child exploitation law also protects children from such tasks.

Valencia, a Primary Six learner at Pagar Primary School in Kaabong district, says their teachers continually caution them about the dangers of doing odd jobs for cash.

"To us girls it is even more dangerous as one can be defiled while at work. I would rather stay in school until I am an adult," Apio says, adding that completing education will enable her do better paying work.

Dennis, a Primary Seven learner at Orwamuge Primary School in Abim district, says avoiding child labour makes one concentrate well in class to attain good grades.

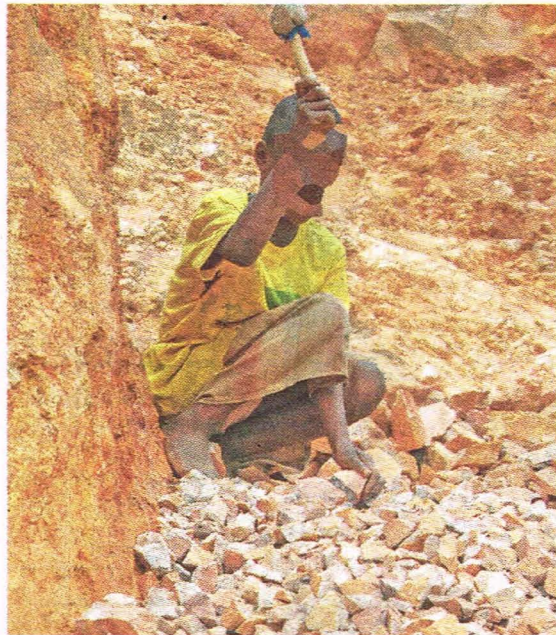
CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR

Dennis notes that once a child starts doing odd jobs in the neighbourhood, they risk dropping out of school.

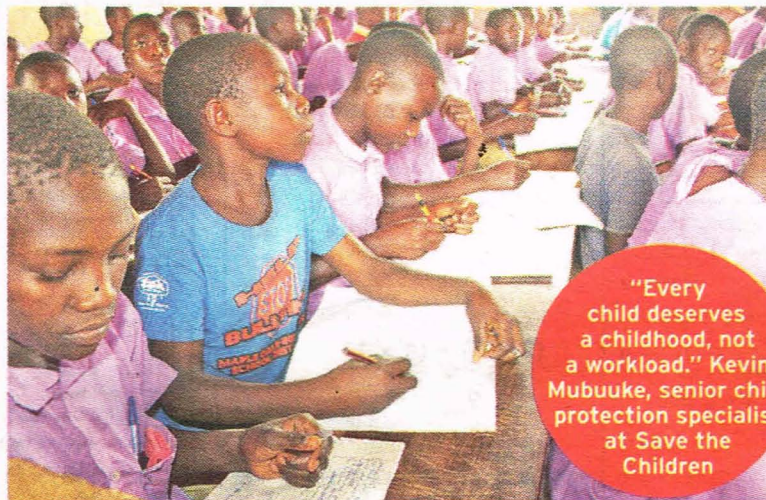
"Money has a way of making a person keep seeking for more. Hence the child may be tempted to work on school days for extra cash and may eventually drop out to work full time," he says.

Dr David Muwanguzi, a health consultant in Iganga district, attributes certain health complications to strenuous work during childhood.

"There is work for children and there is work reserved for adults. So, taking on heavy duties like digging



Child labour, such as working in stone quarries and hawking goods, puts children at risk of harm, disease and exploitation. It is a crime to make children do such work



"Every child deserves a childhood, not a workload." Kevin Mubuuke, senior child protection specialist at Save the Children

Primary five pupils of Ikulwe Primary School in Mayuge district. Avoid work that makes you miss school. PHOTO BY GEORGE BITA

all day in rice fields, carrying bags of cement at building sites or digging up ores at mines may stunt a child's growth or cause life-threatening bone deformations," he warns.

He adds that children who do heavy work also tend to acquire aggressive behaviour due to workplace induced stress. Such children may grow up to become a danger to society.

ENDING CHILD LABOUR

Mubuuke says: "As a society, we must say NO to exploitation and give children the opportunity to learn. Parents, employers, communities, and leaders all have a role to play in keeping children in school and reporting child labour."

Charles Dickens Owinyi, the Abim district education officer, calls upon elders, parents and other stakeholders

to join hands in the fight against child labour.

"Child protection should matter to all of us. The authorities and security forces must be more vigilant and put the last nail in the coffin of this bad habit," Owinyi says.

Valencia proposes that parents who encourage their children to engage in child labour be arrested and prosecuted in courts of law.

"According to the Children's Act, child labour is a crime," she says.

Owinyi hails local governments that have gone the extra mile to enact by-laws that carry hefty fines for offenders.

"In mining areas, the children found in mines during school time are supposed to be apprehended and their parents fined. It is one way of ensuring that the parents do not become accomplices of child labour," he says.

"When we end child labour, we build a safer, brighter future for all," Mubuuke says.