

ELDERLY ASK NEW LEADERS TO INCREASE SAGE

By David Magere
and Rosemary Anena

Older persons in Amuru district have appealed to newly elected leaders to prioritise the timely disbursement of Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) funds, as leaders across northern and central Uganda pledge improved service delivery following the 2026 local government elections.

The elderly are also calling for better dissemination of information about the SAGE programme, which they say remains inaccessible due to bureaucratic bottlenecks and limited community sensitisation.

SAGE is a government social protection initiative that provides cash transfers to vulnerable groups, mainly older persons, to support basic needs, such as food and healthcare.

Last November, government announced that the eligibility age would be lowered from 80 to 65 years, effective the 2026/2027 financial year.

In Amuru district, however, residents say they have yet to benefit due to a lack of information and slow registration processes.

David Obita, an elderly resident of Keyo village in Lamogi sub-county, said he has never been enrolled, despite qualifying for years.

"No one has ever explained to us how this programme works. Many of us only hear about it on the radio,"



A SAGE beneficiary smiles after receiving money in Yumbe district

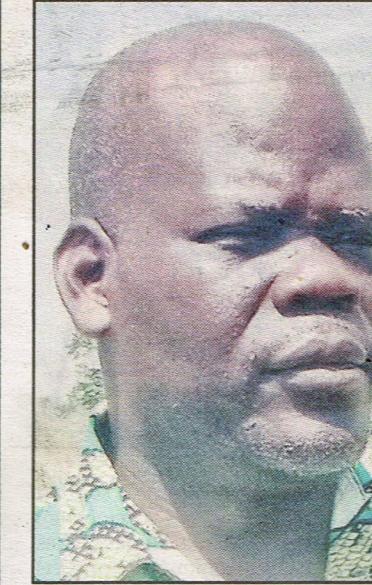
Obita said.

Felix Nyeko of Pakiri village in Palema parish decried what he

described as lengthy registration procedures.

"They tell us to bring documents,

PHOTO BY ADAM GULE



Odongkara

BETWEEN THE LINES

In Amuru district, several elderly residents said they are yet to benefit from the programme due to lack of information and slow registration processes.

then we are told to wait.

Some of us are old and weak. Moving

from office to office is difficult," Nyeko said.

Amuru district community development officer John Bosco Olum revealed that only 1,024 older persons out of the district's 247,574 elderly population have been enrolled on the SAGE system.

He said each beneficiary receives sh75,000 every three months. Olum acknowledged inadequate public awareness, saying: "We are working on improving community outreach so that eligible older persons are registered and supported."

Amuru district chairperson-elect Christopher Odongkara pledged improved service delivery, including better co-ordination of social protection programmes.

In Gulu city, newly elected Laroo-Pece Division mayor Gifter Aber of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) pledged to overhaul service delivery and fight corruption after defeating incumbent Geoffrey Otim of the Democratic Party.

Aber polled 8,081 votes against Otim's 5,403, while Moses Abonga of the People's Front for Freedom received 1,005 votes.

Residents, including Alfred Obel, Sophia Apiyo and vendor Kevin Lamwaka, urged Aber to address compensation, education, water access, street lighting and reduce lock-up fees from sh150,000 to sh75,000.