

Girl vaccinated by Museveni in Pader seeks fees support

The vaccination campaign posters featuring Elizabeth Amito receiving polio vaccine from President Museveni have remained a source of motivation throughout her schooling.

BY SUSAN ACHOLA

The family of 15-year-old Elizabeth Amito has preserved a photograph of President Museveni administering a polio vaccine to her as a three-month-old infant during the national launch of a polio vaccination campaign, hoping it might one day help secure her a scholarship.

The photograph, taken in 2012 at Angagura Primary School in Pader District, shows President Museveni administering oral polio vaccine drops, a symbolic gesture intended to demonstrate the government's commitment to safeguarding Uganda's future.

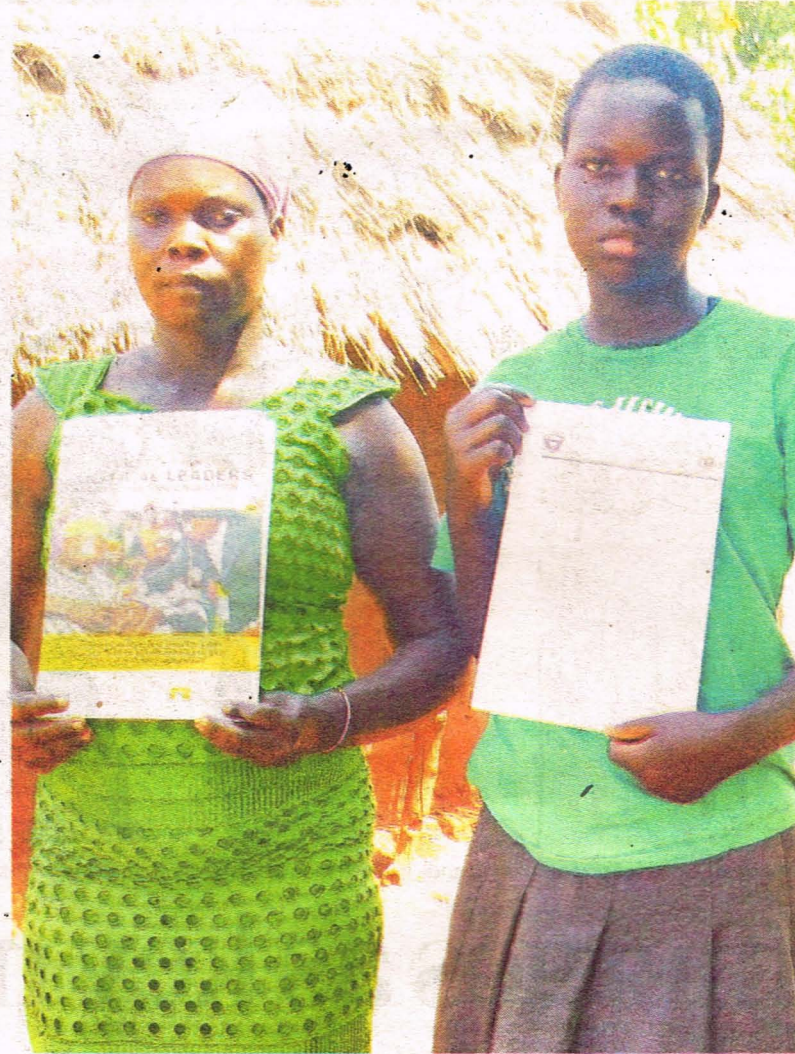
Amito's life was protected through routine immunisation and careful upbringing by her mother, Ms Concy Labong, a farmer from Lajwatek Village, Lajeng Parish, Laguti Sub-county, Pader District.

Ms Labong says she initially preserved the image as a newspaper cutting and later saw the same photograph published in a vaccination campaign magazine. She requested a copy, which she has kept to date.

"I was so excited that day when the President chose my child to vaccinate," Ms Labong says.

She says she showed the photograph to Amito when she was in Primary Five, after which the girl began telling her classmates that the President would one day pay her school fees. Amito has since hoped to meet the President.

Amito sat her Primary Leaving Examination last year at Okinga Primary School in Pader District, scoring Aggregate 15. She now hopes that the photo-



Elizabeth Amito (right), and her mother, Concy Labong, show off the vaccination campaign magazine at their home in Lajwatek Village, Laguti Sub-county, Pader District on January 30. PHOTO/SUSAN ACHOLA

graph may open doors for her secondary education, as her mother says she cannot afford the school fees.

The vaccination campaign posters featuring Amito receiving the vaccine from the President have remained a source of motivation throughout her schooling. "When I look at the photo, I feel motivated to study hard because I believe it will open doors for me," Amito told *Daily Monitor*.

She describes her daily struggle to access education, saying she walked about five kilometres each day from her village to Okinga Primary School. Amito dreams of becoming a doctor, with the aim of saving lives and serving her community.

The deputy head teacher of Okinga Primary School, Mr Bosco Oryema, describes Amito as disciplined, hard-working, and a pupil with strong leadership qualities. He notes that she headed English and debating activities at the school.

Amito's story highlights the value of immunisation programmes, from saving lives to nurturing healthy learners capable of contributing to national development.

A single drop of vaccine administered in 2012 has grown into a determined young Ugandan with aspirations of joining the medical profession. Her mother appeals for support towards Amito's secondary education, saying national investments in child health should be protected to ensure lives saved do not end in unrealised potential.

According to the Uganda Polio Outbreak Response Campaign Report issued by the Ministry of Health in 2024, Uganda was first declared polio-free in 2006 following sustained government interventions. However, the country experienced re-infection with wild poliovirus in 2009.

Another vaccination drive led to a polio-free declaration in 2014, which lasted until 2021. A new outbreak emerged in 2022, prompting renewed vaccination efforts targeting children under five.

The most recent campaign, conducted in 2024 in eastern Uganda, achieved 100 percent coverage in the districts of Mbale, Soroti, Jinja, and Moroto, reaching more than six million children.

The Minister of Health, Dr Jane Ruth Aceng, attributed the success of the campaign to effective community mobilisation by local leaders, Village Health Teams, committed health workers, and strong public cooperation.

2012

The year President Museveni vaccinated now 15-year-old Elizabeth Amito at Angagura Primary School in Pader District during a launch of a vaccination campaign.