

Four students die in Benue communal crisis

The protracted communal crisis within peasant communities of Mbatange-Mbalagh in Gwer Local Government Area of Benue State and Kendev-Mbamar in neighbouring Konshisha Local Government Area has claimed two students of the College of Education, Oju.

The students whose identities could not be ascertained at press time, were reported to have ran into an ambush laid by one of the communities along the Oju-Aliede road.

Information on the reported incidence is still sketchy, but Gwer Local Government chairman, Mr. Simon Iwar, told newsmen in Makurdi that the students died when armed men who laid the ambush intercepted a commercial bus and identified them as members of the enemy community.

He said the students were slaughtered and their bodies mutilated and dumped along the road. "The militia mounted a road block along Oju-Awajir road and a bus conveying passengers from Oju ran into the ambush. They ordered the driver out, identified the two students and butchered them and allowed the rest to continue with their journey", Mr. Iwar said.

From Hir Joseph, Makurdi

But the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), in charge of the Benue State command, Mr. Samuel Jinadu (ASP), refused to confirm on the incidence. He however said the council bosses of the respective local government areas and traditional rulers were meeting with the police commissioner, Mr. Ibiyinka

Kayode and the Special Adviser to the governor on Security Matters, Col. Benjamin Aboho (rtd), to enforce peace between the neighbouring communities.

Trouble started between the two communities a fortnight ago when one Mr. Wade who is said to be from the neighbouring Kendev-Mbamar dug a grave to bury his late brother in Mbatange

where he had lived for several years. Mbatange is Mr. Wade's maternal home where he had lived all his adult life.

But eight youths of Mbatange were alleged to have gone to the burial ceremony and disrupted the proceedings, stopping Mr. Wade from burying his younger brother since, according to them, the deceased does not hail from there.

Education policy must accommodate all - NMEC boss

**By Abdulkadir Badsha
Mukhtar**

Nigeria must adopt a multi-prong approach in its campaign against illiteracy if the country is to succeed in its bid to meet the Millennium Development Goals, Executive Secretary, National Commission for Mass Literacy, Adult and Non-Formal Education (NMEC), Dr Dayo Olagunju, has said.

Addressing members of Batch 'A' of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) in Abuja, Olagunju said such approach must also include massive expansion of human and institutional capacities at all levels of authority to train and support local and community organizations.

Nigeria's education policy, he counselled, must also make room for all her citizens to benefit if the country

is to achieve sustainable development, adding that the country would need to mobilise all resources and build partnerships across relevant agencies and corporate entities in order to meet her education goals by 2015.

Noting that Nigeria at present has about 57.4 million illiterates among its population, Dr Olagunju said professional volunteer organizations, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and international development partners would also need to collaborate and mobilize resources to provide literacy delivery services.

The NMEC Executive Secretary explained that it was the decentralised approach to address the problems of illit-

He said the commission has identified functional literacy for youths and adults, primary and lower secondary equivalency programmes for out-of-school children, youth and young adults as well as short term income generation skills training for youths and adults as key non-formal education priorities to tackle.

Others are post-literacy programmes which sustain and expand levels of literacy, family education for early childhood development, integrated community-based learning approach and capacity building for effective management, he also said.

Dr Olagunju expressed delight that the 2006/2007 Batch 'B' Federal Capital Territory Mass Literacy Community Development Service initiated a number of projects and programmes to fight illiteracy and urged corps members in