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Feature Story

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome to another enlightening edition of Katonga Post your trusted weekly source for voices, victories, and vital updates from Mpigi and Greater Masaka Regions.

Each page of this edition reflects the dedication and unity of our communication officers across the region from the islands of Kalangala to the highlands of Lyantonde. Your commitment to telling the stories that matter is what brings this magazine to life. We deeply appreciate every contributor, editor, and field reporter who made this issue possible.

This week, we spotlight stories that capture both progress and perseverance:

- Lwengo Farmers Embrace Micro-Scale Irrigation Solar-powered innovation is changing the face of agriculture and resilience in Uganda's cattle corridor.
- Masaka City Invests in School Infrastructure – A bold initiative to improve the learning environment in primary schools across the city.
- Youth Rise in Bukomansimbi – A vibrant wave of first-time voters and youth leaders redefining civic participation.

And that's just the beginning. From Kyotera's renewed governance push to the rejuvenation of educators in Masaka, this issue brings you the heartbeat of transformation across our districts.

As we move forward, may we never forget the value of storytelling in nation-building. Or as the late Chinua Achebe once said:

"Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter."

Let Katonga Post be our lion's roar amplifying the voices often unheard, and celebrating progress where it's happening.

Thank you for walking this journey with us. We are building more than a publication we are shaping a more informed, connected, and empowered Buganda.

Warm regards,

Wilson Kutamba
Editor-in-Chief
Katonga Post

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8. Mariam Namaganda - First-Time Voter
9. Ibrahim Mutebi - Masaka City



INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE WEEK

We must look for the households that are still stuck in poverty and bring them along. This is not a political campaign; it is a rescue mission for our people."

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PRESIDENT MUSEVENI TASKS LEADERS WITH PARISH-BY-PARISH AUDIT OF PDM IMPACT

President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has called on local leaders to conduct a detailed parish-by-parish assessment of households that have transitioned into the money economy under the Parish Development Model (PDM).

The President emphasized the need to shift from rhetoric to results, urging leaders to walk closely with the people they serve.

He was speaking to leaders of Greater Mpigi, comprising districts of Mpigi, Butambala and Gomba at Gombe Secondary School in Butambala District.

"I want you to go parish by parish and find out exactly how many households have moved out of poverty. This is the real challenge now. We must stop operating on assumptions. The only way to measure success is to follow up and see the actual shift in people's lives," said President Museveni during his second day of the PDM assessment tour in Greater Mpigi.

According to the President, it is not enough to roll out PDM funds, noting that what matters is how many families have actually changed their way of life by engaging in income-generating activities and joining Uganda's formal economy.

"Our mission is not about distributing money. It is about transforming lives. The Parish Development Model is a tool to end poverty, but it requires close monitoring. You, the leaders, must go back to your people, track their progress, and report results. This is now a war for evidence," the President emphasized.

President Museveni likened the current task to the Biblical parable of the lost sheep.

> *"We must look for the households that are still stuck in poverty and bring them along. This is not a political campaign; it is a rescue mission for our people."*

He urged local leaders to get out of their offices and walk with the people on their

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journey of transformation.

"Get to the field, know your people by name, understand their struggles, and guide them step by step into the money economy," the President said.

President Museveni also cautioned leaders against promising to deliver everything at once, emphasizing that development must be prioritized.

"When we talk about development, we must know that not all sectors can be addressed at the same time. Those who claim they can finish everything at once are liars," he said.

Drawing a comparison to the 1960s, President Museveni praised the tremendous growth in education infrastructure under the NRM government.

"In 1961, when I joined Senior One, Uganda had only six Advanced Level schools, Budo, Kisubi, Ntare, Namagunga, Gayaza, and Nabingo. But today, Mpigi District alone has 11 A' Level government schools, Gomba has six, and Butambala has 10. That's a total of 27 A' Level government schools in Greater Mpigi. This is a great achievement," he noted.

He urged leaders to do a better job of educating citizens about such national milestones.

> *"NRM leaders have a weakness of not teaching people about these achievements," he added.*

President Museveni further underscored the importance of preventive healthcare and personal responsibility in achieving national health.

"Gomba used to be just one district for this whole area. Now, we have more hospitals, immunization, safe water, and improved healthcare. Have you ever heard that Museveni is sick? I've been with you for 40 years. Most diseases are preventable," he said.

"Girls as young as nine can be protected from cervical cancer through vaccination. Clean homes, clean water, and disciplined lifestyle. 80 percent of diseases are preventable. I have been here with you, have you ever heard that Museveni is sick? I practice what I preach."

Turning to family wealth and succession, President Museveni warned Ugandans against dividing family property into small, non-productive plots after the death of a household head.

He proposed a more sustainable model based on structured inheritance and collective ownership.

"When the head of the family goes to heaven, don't fragment the property. Work as a company, Sell the produce, deduct expenses, and then share profits. That way, families stay united, and the land remains productive," he advised.

The also cautioned that traditional division of land often results in long-term family disputes and undermines generational wealth. Instead, he advocated for a shared-ownership system that mirrors models in developed economies.

The President underscored the need for irrigation and modern agricultural practices to maximize productivity.

He cited the example of Prof. Florence Muranga in Bushenyi, who increased banana yields tenfold from 5.3 to 53 tonnes per hectare through the use of irrigation and fertilizers.

"This is the transformation we want. We must use our land wisely," President Museveni said.

President Museveni reaffirmed his commitment to expanding access to skills training, promising to establish a Presidential Industrial Skilling Hub in Greater Mpigi.

On security, he questioned the lack of police canine units in Gomba to address rising thefts.

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"I don't know why there are no canine dogs here. I've directed the police to investigate this and deploy immediately," he stated.

He also revealed government plans to work on the Mpigi– Nakawuka-Kasanje–Kisubi road, as part of broader infrastructure development.

Strong stance against evictions:

President Museveni took a firm stand on land matters, vowing to protect bibanja tenants from illegal evictions by landlords.

"The Land Act is very clear. No one is allowed to evict a kibanja owner. If someone tells you to leave land you have been using, that's abuse of your ignorance. It is illegal," he said.

He announced that a new law would soon require tenants to pay obusulu (ground rent) through sub-county offices, denying landlords the ability to reject payments and use that to threaten evictions.

Tracing Uganda's land woes to the colonial era, President Museveni explained that the Mailo land system emerged when British colonialists rewarded collaborators like Apollo Kagwa with large estates for helping subdue patriotic kings like Mwanga and Kabalega.

"These collaborators were given eight square miles each. That's how the harassment of Ugandan land users began. We must correct this injustice," the President said.

President Museveni also emphasized five pillars for national progress: peace, development, wealth creation, education, and health.

He said peace was the foundation that has enabled the construction of roads, schools, hospitals and industries.

"In 1986, Uganda's budget was Shs 5 billion. Today, it's Shs 72 trillion. But development takes time—even God took six days to create the world. You cannot expect everything to be done in one day," he said.

President Museveni reminded Ugandans that while development is for all, poverty is personal and must be fought individually.

> *"You can have a tarmac road, but if you sit idle beside it, you'll remain poor. Every household must take advantage of national development to improve their own livelihood," he said.*

He emphasized that the Four-Acre Model introduced by the NRM in 1996 remains the key to rural wealth, noting that it includes growing coffee, fruits, food crops, and pasture on small land, alongside poultry and piggery in the backyard.

He cited Serere's Joseph Ijara, who started with 2.5 acres and now earns Shs 800 million in annual profits through poultry farming.

"This is what we mean by waking up. You too can do it," he encouraged.

On his part, Alhajji Moses Kigongo, the First National Vice Chairman of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), made a stirring call for a return to the party's founding values of discipline, humility and integrity.

Alhajji Kigongo also addressed what he described as a growing crisis of character among some NRM leaders.

"Our manners have deteriorated; we must go back to discipline. Respect the people. Treat the ordinary citizens with kindness. Explain to them what you have achieved, don't let your behavior betray your progress," he advised.

In a pointed critique, he warned that the corrupting influence of money had changed the moral compass of some members of the party.

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"Let money not change you. Long ago, NRM leaders were known for good manners and discipline. Today, too many have become liars, the NRM used to be distinguished by its integrity. That must return," he said.

Alhajji Kigongo also urged internal reconciliation and unity, calling for restraint in leadership contests.

"Why should six people be standing for one position in one party? Sit down, reconcile, and decide together. We need unity, not division," he said.

The veteran leader reminded attendees that the strength of the NRM has always come from its principled foundation.

"Let us change our ways. The NRM stood and succeeded on discipline. That is what will carry us forward," he concluded.

In an address delivered on behalf of the leaders of Greater Mpigi, the LC5 Chairman of Gomba District, Mr. Geoffrey Kiviiri, hailed President Yoweri Museveni for what he called a clear and deliberate effort to pull millions of Ugandans out of poverty and into the money economy.

Reading from a Memorandum of Understanding signed by leaders from Gomba, Mpigi, and Butambala, Mr. Kiviiri praised the President for introducing game-changing government initiatives, including the Parish Development Model, Youth Livelihood Program, NAADS, UWEP, and Emyooga.

"These programs are not just policy on paper, they are the reason a mother in Gomba now owns a goat farm, why a youth in Butambala has a welding shop, and why a family in Mpigi is no longer surviving on subsistence alone. Mr. President, you have shifted the ground beneath our feet," he said.

Mr. Kiviiri noted that across the region, which is home to more than 672,000 people, 65% of the population has now joined the money economy.

"There's a visible difference; our people are no longer trapped in that cycle of poverty. They are working, saving, producing and they have entered a new era," he said.

He pointed to the Parish Development Model as a standout success, saying that in just three years, billions of shillings have flowed into the region, channeled through community SACCOs: 49 in Gomba, 25 in Butambala, and 56 in Mpigi.

Mr. Kiviiri confirmed that all the funds allocated for this financial year had already been received.

> *"We are close to achieving 100% household coverage. This money has not only arrived, it's working. It's building businesses. It's restoring dignity," he said.*

However, he did express concern over the performance of the Emyooga funds, admitting that the impact has not matched that of PDM.

"Let us remember, this money is not to be eaten, It is to initiate projects that generate wealth and should be returned after two years so others can benefit. That is how we create a cycle of progress," Mr. Kiviiri warned.

Beyond economic reform, Mr. Kiviiri applauded the President for investments in critical infrastructure.

He also lauded the Presidential Industrial Hubs, calling them a light for the youth who had fallen through the cracks. According to Mr. Kiviiri, 243 young people from the region have so far graduated from the Industrial Hub with practical vocational skills.

"These are children who dropped out of school, who had been written off. Now they are carpenters, tailors, electricians. They are useful to their country. That is the President's legacy," he said.

Also in attendance were Hon. Matia Kasaija, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon.

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Judith Nabakooba, the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, Hon. Evelyne Anite, the Minister of State for Investment and Privatization, the NRM Deputy Secretary General, Hon. Rose Namayanja, local leaders, religious leaders, among others.









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The landmark and building at Bugoma, where believers gather to pray, offer intentions, and reflect on the origins of Catholicism in Uganda

BUGOMA: THE TRUE FIRST LANDING OF CATHOLICISM IN UGANDA

By Ntabaazi Geoffrey Nsumba Communications Officer, Kalangala District

"Before Kigungu, there was Bugoma. Before monuments were raised, faith landed here."

Located along the serene shores of Lake Victoria, in Kalangala District, Bugoma Mapeera Landing Site stands as a historically significant yet under-recognized location in Uganda's religious and cultural narrative. While many acknowledge Kigungu as the primary point of contact for Catholic missionaries in Uganda, historical evidence affirms that Bugoma was, in fact, the first location where Catholicism physically arrived in the country.

On 15th February 1879, Fr. Siméon Lourdel (commonly known as Mapeera) and Brother Amans Delmas, both members of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers), arrived at Bugoma after departing from Tanganyika. Their intended route was toward Buganda via Luzira. However, due to unforeseen circumstances including the boat striking hidden rocks in the lake—they were forced to make landfall at

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Bugoma.

The missionaries were welcomed by a local landlord named Ssekalaala, who offered them hospitality. During their two-day stay, they repaired their vessel, prayed, and prepared for the evangelization mission that would later transform Uganda's religious landscape.

While Kigungu Landing Site has received considerable attention and investment over the years, it is essential to correct a common historical misconception. The missionaries' subsequent landing at Kigungu on 17th February 1879 occurred only after their boat began leaking again under harsh weather conditions. This secondary landing, though significant, does not constitute the first point of arrival.

Bugoma, therefore, holds the distinction of being the initial point of contact between Catholic missionaries and Ugandan soil. It was here that the first prayers were said and where the foundation of the Catholic faith in Uganda was physically laid.

Despite its historical and religious importance, Bugoma remains comparatively obscure. However, the site has not been forgotten by the local Catholic community. A large commemorative cross has been erected at the very spot where Fr. Mapeera and Brother Amans first disembarked, symbolizing the enduring faith and gratitude of the people of Kalangala.

There are also plans to install statues honoring Fr. Mapeera, Brother Amans, and Fr. Jules Chantemerle the first parish priest in the area, who tragically lost his life in a trap originally intended for wildlife. These initiatives, however, are pending due to limited funding and lack of broader institutional support.

In addition to its religious legacy, Bugoma also plays a notable role in Uganda's technological advancement. The area hosts the site of the first marine cable power installation in the country, which connects Kalangala's Buggala Island to the national electricity grid under the Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL). This dual heritagespiritual and industrial makes Bugoma a unique landmark in Uganda's development journey.

Bugoma Mapeera Landing Site is a vital part of Uganda's cultural, religious, and national history. As pilgrims continue to visit the site to offer prayers and seek divine intervention, it remains a powerful symbol of faith and legacy. The site also provides an opportunity for religious tourism, academic research, and national heritage preservation.

As government institutions, religious bodies, and cultural agencies work to preserve and promote Uganda's spiritual heritage, it is important that Bugoma be afforded the recognition and development it rightfully deserves. The current imbalance in historical commemoration where Bugoma remains underdeveloped while other sites flourish should be urgently addressed.

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CIVIL SERVANTS URGED TO EMBRACE PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN KYOTERA DISTRICT



Nabigasa Maternity ward is under renovation and is expected to fulfill some of the motives of the Parish Development Model

By Ambrose Musasizi, Communication Officer, Kyotera District

Kyotera District – Civil servants in Kyotera have been urged to actively support and implement the Parish Development Model (PDM) as a strategy to enhance service delivery and lift communities out of poverty. The call was made during a recent stakeholders' meeting convened by district leadership, which brought together key personnel from lower local governments.

Held at the district headquarters, the meeting aimed to sensitize public servants on the significance of the PDM's seven pillars: production, storage, processing and marketing; infrastructure and economic services; financial inclusion; social services; mindset change; parish-based management information systems; and governance and administration.

Speaking at the event, Acting Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Mr. Mohammad Nfitimukiza emphasized that adherence to these pillars is a professional obligation for all government employees. He warned that any civil servant found undermining or contradicting the model's core principles would face

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disciplinary measures.

"PDM is not simply about disbursing funds to individuals," Mr. Nfitimukiza said. "It's a comprehensive development strategy that encompasses education, healthcare, agriculture, and infrastructure. We will not tolerate actions that jeopardize this national program."

His sentiments were echoed by District Chairperson Mr. Patrick Kintu Kisekulo, who cautioned civil servants and SACCO leaders against politicizing the initiative. He stressed that the success of PDM hinges on unity and transparency among all stakeholders, regardless of political affiliation.

> *"PDM funds are for all Ugandans. Injecting politics into the process will only erode public trust and undermine the program's credibility," Mr. Kisekulo stated.*

The Parish Development Model, a flagship initiative by the Government of Uganda, seeks to eradicate poverty through grassroots-driven wealth creation. By empowering parishes—the lowest administrative units—to plan and execute development interventions based on local needs, the model aims to drive inclusive, community-level transformation.

Among those in attendance was Mr. Henry Kasumba, Sub County Chief of Lwankoni, who shared success stories from his area. He praised the government's initiative, noting its positive impact.

"In Lwankoni, residents are thriving through PDM. We have beneficiaries involved in poultry, piggery, passion fruit farming, and retail businesses. These ventures are not only boosting household incomes but also creating jobs for youth and women," Mr. Kasumba reported.

However, he also highlighted challenges hindering full implementation, particularly poor transportation infrastructure that limits effective supervision and monitoring of PDM activities in remote parishes.

> *"Many of our staff lack transport, making it difficult to track the progress of projects or ensure proper use of funds," he explained.*

Mr. Kasumba also pointed to frustrations among community members who are denied access to PDM funds due to ineligibility, particularly the lack of National IDs—a prerequisite for participation. In some instances, tensions have escalated into hostility toward civil servants.

The issue of National Identification emerged repeatedly during the session, with stakeholders calling on the government to streamline the registration process to include more citizens in the program.

Ms. Justine Nabayunga, Community Development Officer (CDO) from Kabira Sub County, advocated for intensified community sensitization to counter widespread misinformation.

"There's a misconception that PDM

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is a political handout," she said. "We need robust education campaigns to explain that it's a structured, long-term development program."

District officials pledged to enhance technical support and training for civil servants and promised to escalate unresolved issues such as transportation and National ID access to the Ministry of Local Government for urgent attention.

As the meeting concluded, participants were reminded that the ultimate goal of the PDM is to transition 39% of Uganda's population from subsistence living to a money-based economy. Realizing this vision, officials said, requires unwavering commitment and integrity from all civil servants.

"It starts with us," Mr. Kisekulo emphasized. "We must lead by example, follow the guidelines, and serve our communities impartially. Only then can PDM deliver the transformative change we all hope for."

The district leadership also encouraged community members to cooperate with civil servants and report any irregularities through the proper channels. With strong partnerships and consistent oversight, officials remain optimistic that the Parish Development Model will bring meaningful, lasting development to Kyotera and beyond.

INVESTING IN EDUCATORS: MASAKA'S STRATEGY TO STRENGTHEN SCHOOLS

By Augustine Bukululu ,
Communication Officer,
Masaka District

Masaka District, like many others across the country, is facing an exodus of primary school teachers an issue that threatens the foundation of its education system. But instead of standing by, the district has taken a proactive stance: launching a district-wide teachers' retreat aimed at restoring morale and reversing the alarming trend.

Masaka District has lost over 100 teachers in just two financial years, according to Gerald Nsambu, the District Education Officer. With only 435 teachers in total, the impact is profound.

"This is not just a statistic. It's a reflection of lost hope among our educators," Nsambu told Katonga Post. "We needed a timely intervention. These refresher retreats are our way of saying: You matter."

Nsambu pointed to a growing number of early retirements symptomatic of deeper dissatisfaction. However, he remains optimistic that this intervention can reset the district's educational trajectory.

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The retreat, held at sub-county headquarters across Masaka, gathered teachers from all 43 government-aided primary schools in the district. Its goal? To rejuvenate a weary workforce and build a stronger professional community.

Sulaiman Bbaale, head teacher at Butaale Islamic Primary School, was candid about the root causes.

"Low salaries are the elephant in the room," Bbaale explained. "Especially for male teachers, the pressure of providing for families amidst rising costs has pushed many to leave. But this retrea it reminds us why we joined the profession in the first place."

District leaders didn't shy away from addressing the larger structural challenges facing the sector. Andrew Lukyamuzi Batemyetto, Masaka District Chairperson, praised the initiative but called on the central government to act.

> *"You can't expect teachers to transform society when they're earning peanuts," he said. "Salary enhancement isn't just a wish it's a necessity if we're serious about education."*

Peter Ssenkungu, workers' representative for the district, stressed the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and school management.

"When parents disengage and school heads isolate themselves, it breeds frustration. We need stronger school-community relationships and practical steps like income-generating projects can make a difference."

Resident District Commissioner Janat Billy Mulindwa offered a dose of empathy and encouragement. While acknowledging that systemic reforms take time, she urged teachers to seek interim solutions.



Nsambu Gerald DEO standing addressing teachers

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Peter Ssenkungu District Councilor for workers addressing teachers at Bukakata Subcounty headquarters

> *"We hear you. The government is working to address your concerns—just as it did for science teachers," Mulindwa said. "In the meantime, teachers can explore side projects to ease financial strain. And above all, maintain harmony in your schools—it affects the children the most."*

Masaka currently operates 43 UPE primary schools and four government-owned secondary schools. With teacher retention now a top priority, education stakeholders are watching closely to see whether this retreat will mark the beginning of long-term change.

What's clear is this: for many educators in Masaka, the retreat has already reignited something essential a sense of purpose.

"We didn't choose teaching for the money," one participant said off-record. "We chose it because we believed we could make a difference. Maybe it's time we remember that."

Got thoughts on the teacher dropout crisis in your district? Share your story with us at *katongapost@gmail.com*

Follow us on *Twitter @KatongaPost* for more updates on education, policy, and local impact stories.

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KYOTERA COUNCILORS PASS STRINGENT RESOLUTIONS TO BOOST GOVERNANCE AHEAD OF 2025/2026 BUDGET

By Ambrose Musasizi, Communication Officer, Kyotera District

Councillors in Kyotera District have passed a stringent resolution ahead of the 2025/2026 financial year to tighten governance and improve service delivery. The measures, adopted during a council meeting held at the district headquarters, aim to restore discipline, enhance accountability, and strengthen coordination among government officials.

Top among the resolutions was a mandate requiring all departmental heads to attend council meetings without exception. "No departmental activity should coincide with council meeting days," the council agreed, underscoring the primacy of legislative functions over administrative scheduling.

The council also zeroed in on attendance, moving to withhold sitting allowances from councilors who miss committee or plenary sessions without valid, documented excuses. The decision was framed not as punitive, but corrective.

"These are not punitive measures," said District Speaker Francis Xavier Lubinga. "They are meant to bring sanity and respect to council work. We have a responsibility to our electorate, and we cannot continue operating in a casual manner."

Lubinga urged his fellow leaders to act in unity and prioritize shared goals over personal interests. "Our success as a district hinges on collective action and shared responsibility. When we pull in different directions, service delivery suffers and the people lose faith in us."

The session also turned a spotlight on the Girls' and Women's Empowerment (GLOW) Grant an initiative intended to support income-generating projects for women and girls. Councilors expressed concern over what they described as irregular and exclusive access to the funds, with some alleging that only individuals with links to disbursing banks were benefitting.

"The GLOW grant was meant to help women and young girls across the district, but what we are seeing is that the money ends up in the hands of a few," one councilor remarked.

In response, the council proposed that future GLOW fund disbursements be overseen directly by district officials to ensure fairness, transparency, and proper monitoring.

Another key issue raised was the slow issuance of appointment letters and transfer postings, particularly in critical sectors such as health and education. Councilors noted that such delays contribute to absenteeism and service delivery gaps at the grassroots level. They called for expedited human resource processes to stabilize operations in underserved departments.

In a bid to improve educational oversight, the council requested logistical support from the central government specifically, two vehicles and seven motorcycles for the Education Department. The lack of transportation, officials said, has crippled inspection efforts and left rural schools neglected.

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> *"With better mobility, we can reach even the most remote schools and ensure standards are being upheld," said one education officer in attendance.*

District Chairperson Patrick Kintu Kisekulo addressed what he described as a "disconnect" between elected leaders and the technical wing of the administration. "Councilors and technical staff have been working in silos, yet we are supposed to be partners in development," he said. "This disunity affects planning, execution, and ultimately the lives of the people we serve."

Kisekulo proposed regular joint meetings between technical officers and councilors as a way to build trust and streamline district operations.

Councillors expressed optimism that the newly adopted resolutions would mark a turning point for Kyotera. Many saw the upcoming financial year as a critical window for resetting priorities and repairing strained systems.

Residents have long voiced frustration over poor services, corruption, and bureaucratic inertia. Now, with public trust on the line, the council's latest actions could serve as a litmus test for change.

> *"We owe it to our people to do better," one councilor concluded. "These resolutions are our commitment to that cause."*

Whether these commitments will translate into real impact or simply remain political rhetoric will be revealed in the months ahead.



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LWENGO FARMERS EMBRACE MICRO-SCALE IRRIGATION TO BOOST AGRICULTURAL YIELDS



The DCAO in the middle commissioning one of the irrigation sites



Hon Nyindo Mustapha irrigating his coffee nursery

By Ssekabira Peters – Communication Officer, Lwengo District

Lwengo District, Uganda – In Uganda's cattle corridor, Lwengo District is heavily reliant on agriculture, yet its farmers have long struggled with unpredictable weather and prolonged droughts. These climatic challenges have consistently undermined crop productivity and food security.

Now, a government-backed innovation is changing the game.

To address water scarcity and boost yields, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), through the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) Programme, launched a micro-scale irrigation initiative. This program provides solar-powered irrigation systems to smallholder farmers empowering them to irrigate year-round.

In the 2024/2025 financial year alone, 22 farmers in Lwengo have already received solar irrigation kits, enabling them to grow crops even during dry spells.

> *"With the micro-scale irrigation, I am now able to irrigate both my coffee nursery and mature coffee trees," says Hon. Mustapha Nyindo, a farmer and local leader.*

"Previously, during the dry season, we would watch our crops wither away.

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Now, irrigation has breathed new life into my farm."

Lwengo is targeting a bold goal: to become Uganda's leading coffee-producing district. Thanks to irrigation, farmers can now plant and harvest multiple times a year. For cash crops like coffee, this shift is proving transformative.

"Ever since I began using the solar-powered irrigation system, my coffee harvest has increased significantly," says Mr. Ssenfuka Galumonde of Kiseka Sub-county.

Beyond coffee, irrigation has opened up cultivation of vegetables, bananas, maize, and beans diversifying production and enhancing food security at the household level.

To maximize impact, the District Production Department provides ongoing technical support and farmer training. This includes guidance on system installation, maintenance, and water-efficient practices.

"The introduction of micro-scale irrigation has been a game-changer," says Mrs. Nandawula Allen, the District Production Officer.

> *"If we continue at this pace, Lwengo could soon take the lead in coffee production nationwide."*

The use of solar energy makes these irrigation systems not just cost-effective but environmentally sustainable. Unlike fuel-powered pumps, solar systems reduce emissions while cutting operational costs.

"Micro-scale irrigation is perfectly suited for smallholder farmers in regions like Lwengo," explains Mr. Kashageho Bailon, Senior Agricultural Engineer.

"This technology could transform how we do agriculture in the district."

Local markets are already feeling the ripple effects. With more produce available, farmers are enjoying improved bargaining power and increased incomes. Women and youth, often marginalized in traditional agriculture, are finding new opportunities through the scheme.

District leaders are exploring complementary strategies to support the irrigation effort such as constructing valley tanks, small dams, and promoting rainwater harvesting. These integrated solutions are key to long-term climate resilience.

> *"We're seeing a shift from seasonal survival to sustained success," says Mrs. Nandawula. "Our farmers are now farming with confidence."*

With strong government support, community engagement, and climate-smart innovations, Lwengo District is steadily transforming its agricultural sector. Its dream of leading the country in coffee production is no longer a distant hope but an attainable goal powered by solar irrigation and farmer resilience.

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LYANTONDE FARMERS TURN TO FISH AS CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE TAKES ROOT



Fisheries officer and fish farmers in Lyantonde district visting fish ponds on June 23,2025 photo by Wilson Kutamba

By Wilson Kutamba, Communication Officer, Lyantonde District

Lyantonde District – Until recently, the idea of fish farming in Lyantonde was met with skepticism, if not outright disbelief. For many years, residents in this semi-arid part of Uganda believed fish could only survive in lakes, rivers, or swamps. The concept of raising fish in man-made ponds seemed foreign even impossible.

But that perception is changing rapidly.

In March 2018, the Fisheries Unit under Lyantonde District's Production Department launched a campaign to demystify fish farming and promote it as a viable agricultural enterprise much like poultry or cattle rearing. This initiative included community sensitization drives across all sub-counties, along with benchmarking visits to successful farms such as Senya Fish Farm in Masaka City.

"We had to start by changing people's mindsets," says Mr. Raphael Akambamu, the District Fisheries Officer. "Many in the community, particularly pastoralists, viewed

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fish as a taboo food. Some even considered fish farming an elite or scientific endeavor beyond their reach."

This cultural resistance, combined with the region's dry climate, initially hindered adoption. Lyantonde lies in Uganda's cattle corridor, an area often plagued by prolonged dry spells and limited surface water sources a real concern for farmers considering pond-based fish farming.

Despite the odds, interest slowly began to grow. Of the initial 30 farmers reached during the sensitization campaign, 10 took the leap and constructed fish ponds.

In 2021, the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) stepped in to bolster these early adopters by supplying fingerlings juvenile fish used to stock ponds. Thirteen farmers benefited from this intervention.

"Government support helped a lot," Mr. Akambamu notes. "But what truly sparked the turning point was showcasing local success stories real people from Lyantonde who made it work."

Today, in 2025, Lyantonde boasts more than 60 active fish ponds housing an estimated 600,000 fish. These are spread across sub-counties such as Mpumudde, Kinuuka, and Lyantonde Town Council. What was once dismissed as unfeasible is now transforming livelihoods and enhancing food security.

One such success story is Mr. Ashaba Hanington, a fish farmer in Mpumudde.

"Fish farming has changed my life," he says. "I can now pay my children's school fees, buy household necessities, and live a dignified life all from the proceeds of my fish."



Fisheries officer and fish farmers in Lyantonde district visting fish ponds on June 23,2025 photo by Wilson Kutamba



Fisheries officer and fish farmers in Lyantonde district visting fish ponds on June 23,2025 photo by Wilson Kutamba

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Mr. Lumu Muhammad, another farmer from Mpumudde, praises the district's continued guidance.

"It's just like any other type of farming, like keeping cows," he explains. "With the guidance we get from the Fisheries Officer, we're learning, earning, and even teaching others."

The benefits extend well beyond income. According to Mr. Twesigomwe Kenneth, the District Production Officer, fish farming is improving household nutrition, especially among children.

> *"We are seeing more families consuming fish regularly, which is enhancing their nutrition," he says. "There is also a new culture of knowledge-sharing. Experienced farmers are training their peers, creating a ripple effect of best practices."*

While aquaculture is not new to Uganda, it has traditionally taken a backseat to capture fisheries from natural water bodies like Lake Victoria, Lake Kyoga, and Lake Albert. But due to overfishing and dwindling fish stocks, the government has in recent years shifted its focus to fish farming as a sustainable alternative.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda now produces over 120,000 metric tons of farmed fish annually. The sector employs thousands directly and indirectly, with tilapia and catfish as the most commonly farmed species.

However, challenges persist. Farmers face barriers such as limited access to affordable feed, clean water, technical expertise, and high-quality fingerlings.

In Lyantonde, efforts are underway to address these challenges. Training programs on rainwater harvesting, pond construction, and local feed formulation are helping farmers adapt to the region's water constraints.

"We are working closely with extension workers and NGOs to help farmers build water reservoirs and adopt smart aquaculture practices," says Mr. Akambamu.

With continued support, farmer education, and a gradual shift in cultural attitudes, this once-dismissed venture could soon become a cornerstone of the district's agricultural economy.



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Masaka RCC Ahamada Washaki while comissioning a class room block at Kako primary school in Masaka city

MASAKA CITY INVESTS BIG IN SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

By Ibrahim Mutebi, Communication Officer, Masaka City

MASAKA CITY – In a major step towards improving education standards, Masaka City has rolled out new infrastructure projects across several primary schools. The initiative, led by Resident City Commissioner (RCC) Ahamada Washaki, includes newly constructed libraries, classroom blocks, and renovated sanitation facilities all aimed at creating safer and more conducive learning environments.

"We are not just building structures we're investing in the future of our children," RCC Washaki said during the commissioning ceremony.

The upgrades kicked off at Kako Primary School in Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, where RCC

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Washaki officially opened a new school library and staffroom. The team then moved to Butale Primary School in Kimanya-Kabonera Division to unveil new classroom blocks and later visited Gayaza-Muliira Primary School, where a modernized toilet facility was handed over to the school community.

The events were attended by key city officials, including City Town Clerk Kaweesi Daniel, Deputy Town Clerk Alex Baingana, and school leaders. Pupils and parents gathered to celebrate the transformation of their learning spaces.

According to Masaka City Education Officer Steven Kakeeto, six primary schools are currently undergoing renovations under a broader push for environmentally friendly school environments. Schools already benefiting from the improvements include Kitenga P/S, Kako P/S, Butale C/U, and Kiwanyi P/S.

> *"This financial year, Masaka City received over UGX 370 million through the schools' maintenance grant," Kakeeto noted. "The funds are earmarked for critical renovations of buildings and sanitation facilities."*

The city's approach aligns with national goals to improve Universal Primary Education (UPE) infrastructure, especially in underserved areas.

RCC Washaki took a moment to applaud the city's administrative leadership for transparency in managing public funds.

"I commend Town Clerk Mr. Kaweesi Daniel for his due diligence and stewardship. Accountability is not optional it's essential," he said.

His comments underscore growing calls for stronger oversight in the use of education budgets across Uganda.

At Kako Primary School, School Management Committee Chairperson Mr. Mpiima Mike expressed appreciation for the renovations and their impact on both morale and academic focus.

> *"These improvements have revived the glory and dignity of the Bishop's school," Mpiima said. "We're now hopeful but we still need support for teachers' quarters and renovation of our main hall."*

Kako Primary School has also seen other recent developments. During the Tarehe Sita celebrations earlier this year, the UPDF constructed a two-classroom block at the school. The institution continues to maintain strong performance under the UPE system.

With continued support and accountability, these changes promise a brighter future for learners across the region.

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NATIONAL MEDICAL STORES DELIVERS DRUGS TO LWENGO HEALTH FACILITIES

By Ssekabira Peters – Communication Officer, Lwengo District

Lwengo, Uganda – June 19, 2025 — In a significant boost to the healthcare sector, the National Medical Stores (NMS) delivered a consignment of essential medicines and medical supplies to Lwengo District. The delivery was officially received at the Lwengo District Headquarters by key district officials and is part of the government's routine quarterly support to public health facilities.



Offloading of medical supplies at Lwengo Medical Stores, June 19, 2025

According to district authorities, the supplies will be distributed to all government-run health centers, including Health Centre IIs, IIIs, and IVs across the district, serving both rural and urban populations. This initiative is a critical component of the government's commitment to maintaining consistent access to vital medical resources through NMS.

Speaking on behalf of the District Health Department, Dr. Moses Kafumbe, the District Health Officer (DHO), expressed appreciation for the timely intervention.

> *"We appreciate the efforts by the government and National Medical Stores for ensuring that our health facilities are stocked with essential medicines," Dr. Kafumbe said. "This delivery is timely and will significantly contribute to the treatment of common illnesses like malaria, respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, and maternal health needs."*

He further emphasized that the availability of medicines is a cornerstone of quality healthcare.

"Consistent support from the central government ensures that the district can continue to provide essential services to its population," he added.

Hon. Vincent Birimuye, Secretary for Health and Vice Chairperson of the Lwengo District Council, also lauded the government's ongoing support.

"On behalf of the people of Lwengo, I wish to thank the government for consistently

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supporting our district in various aspects, especially in the health sector," said Hon. Birimuye. "This delivery is a testament to our collective commitment to a healthier and more productive society."

However, Hon. Birimuye used the occasion to call for greater discipline among health workers.

"We have had growing concerns from members of the public regarding absenteeism by some health workers," he cautioned. "This is unacceptable, especially when the government is making such significant efforts to ensure you have the tools and medicines to work with. Any health worker found neglecting their duty will be submitted to the disciplinary committee without hesitation."

Mr. Charles Mwanani, the Acting District Drugs Dispenser, assured residents that the supplies would be distributed fairly and transparently.

"We are committed to ensuring that these drugs reach every designated health center within the district," Mr. Mwanani stated. "Our logistics team is ready, and distribution will begin immediately. Accountability is key, and we shall also be conducting follow-ups to ensure that the medicines are used appropriately."

To further reinforce transparency, the Office of the District Internal Security Officer (DISO) will supervise the distribution in partnership with the District Health Department. Local council leaders, including LC1 and LC3 chairpersons, have been encouraged to monitor medicine usage in their communities and report any irregularities.

Local leaders and residents welcomed the news with optimism. Many noted that chronic shortages at their nearest health centers have often forced them to travel long distances, sometimes to Masaka, for basic medical care.

The Ministry of Health, working with NMS, reiterated its commitment to equitable access to essential medicines as part of the broader Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP), which aims to achieve Universal Health Coverage for all Ugandans.

As part of these efforts, the government is also investing in digital health information systems to track drug deliveries, prevent stock-outs, and enhance accountability in public health facilities.

"Let us all remember that access to healthcare is a right, not a privilege," said Dr. Kafumbe. "Together, we must uphold the values of integrity, service, and compassion as we serve our communities."



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PRESIDENT MUSEVENI VOWS CRACKDOWN ON ELECTORAL MALPRACTICE AND THEFT IN BUGANDA REGION

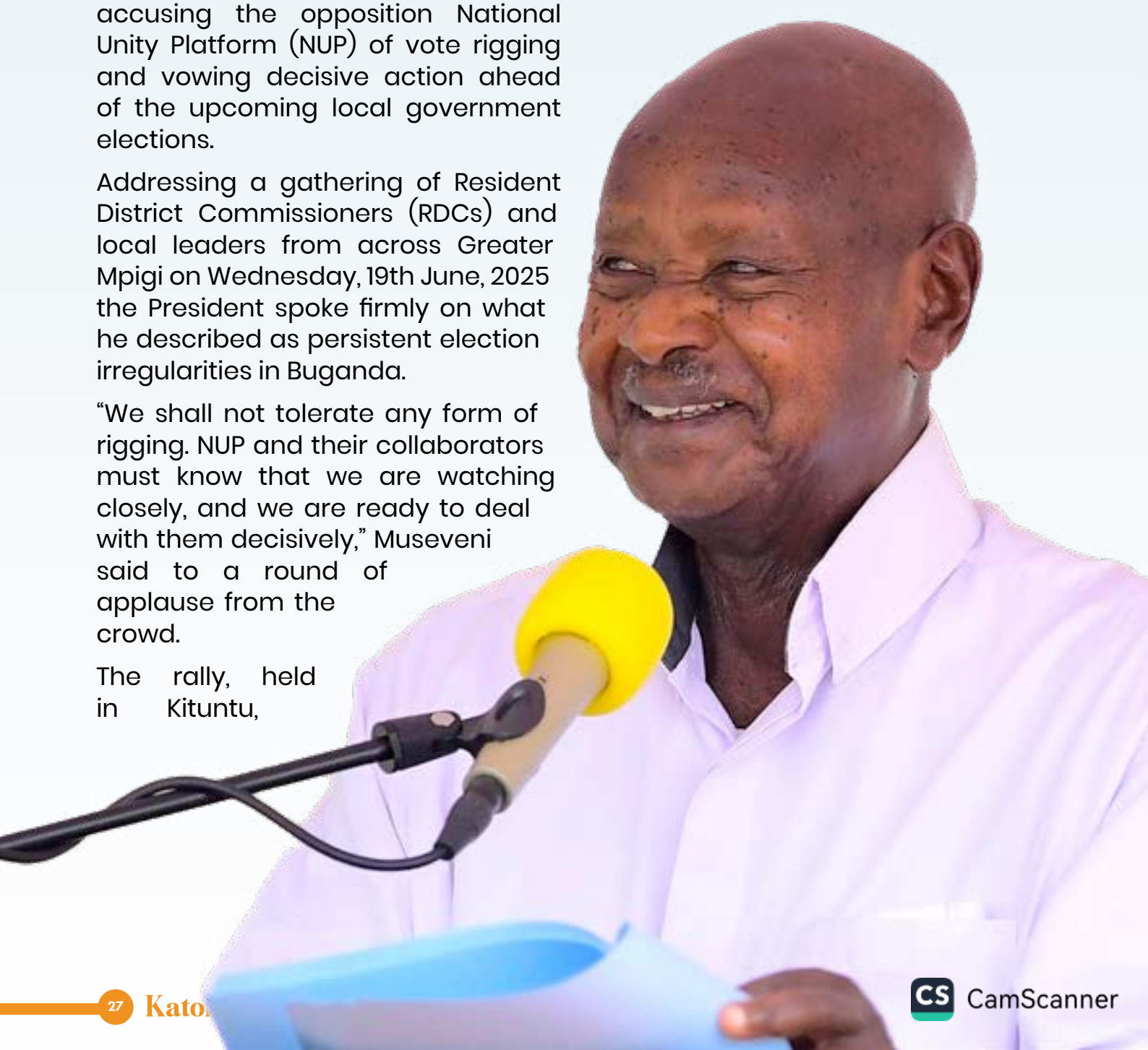
By Nalubwama Mariam, Communication Officer, Butambala District

KITUNTU, MAWOKOTA SOUTH — President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has issued a stern warning against electoral malpractice in the Buganda region, accusing the opposition National Unity Platform (NUP) of vote rigging and vowing decisive action ahead of the upcoming local government elections.

Addressing a gathering of Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and local leaders from across Greater Mpigi on Wednesday, 19th June, 2025 the President spoke firmly on what he described as persistent election irregularities in Buganda.

"We shall not tolerate any form of rigging. NUP and their collaborators must know that we are watching closely, and we are ready to deal with them decisively," Museveni said to a round of applause from the crowd.

The rally, held in Kituntu, Mawokota South, underscored the government's intent to tighten oversight of the electoral process as political tensions continue to simmer in the



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region. The President emphasized that the integrity of elections is non-negotiable and reiterated the state's commitment to enforcing electoral laws without compromise.

In a broader crackdown on lawlessness, President Museveni also took aim at the judiciary, directing law enforcement and judicial officers to deny bail to individuals accused of theft. He criticized what he termed as "excessive leniency" in the courts, arguing that it was emboldening criminals and eroding public confidence in the justice system.

"Anyone caught stealing must stay in jail. No more bails for thieves," he declared, insisting that stricter punishment would help restore discipline and accountability in society.

The President's remarks come amid growing concerns over rising crime and electoral tensions, particularly in central Uganda, where opposition support remains strong. His address served both as a political message and a directive to state institutions to reinforce order ahead of the 2025 election cycle.

With the local government elections drawing closer, the government has pledged to increase vigilance and implement tougher enforcement mechanisms to deter both political and criminal offenses.



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UgIFT PROGRAMME REVAMPS FIVE LYANTONDE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By Wilson Kutamba, Communication Officer, Lyantonde



Districts counncillors togetehr with officials from education department duirng a monitoring visit at Kinuuka Primary school on one of rehabiliated classroom block

Lyantonde, Uganda – Parents, pupils, and education officials are celebrating the rehabilitation of classroom blocks at five government-aided primary schools in Lyantonde District, made possible through funding from the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UgIFT) Programme.

The renovations, recently completed, have breathed new life into previously dilapidated structures, improving learning conditions for hundreds of children. The schools that benefited include Kinuuka, Kasana, Karyamenvu, Lyakajura, and Katovu Primary School.

At Kinuuka Primary School, which supports children with disabilities, the refurbishment has been especially well-received.

> *"As parents, we are very happy that our children will now learn in clean and safe classrooms. A good environment is essential for academic performance," said Mr. Abel Byamukama, a parent at the school.*

During a monitoring visit on Monday, June 23, 2025, the Secretary for Education, Ms. Jane Francis Nakasi, said the school was selected due to its unique role in inclusive education.

"Kinuuka is one of the few schools in Lyantonde that accommodates children with disabilities. We are advocating for additional resources to improve facilities across the district to better support inclusive learning," she said.

The school's head teacher, Mr. Ahirwe

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Moses, expressed gratitude for the support but noted ongoing challenges.

"We are thankful for the rehabilitation so far, but many of our classroom blocks are still in poor condition. We kindly request the district to allocate more funds in the next financial year," he said.

At Kasana Primary School, similar sentiments were echoed.

> *"The renovations are a big boost, but we still lack enough classrooms to accommodate our large pupil population," said Ms. Aidah Namukasa, the Head Teacher. "We ask government to consider constructing additional blocks."*

The renovations were funded through UgIFT, a government programme aimed at enhancing service delivery by providing equitable financing to local governments.

"We worked within the available resources to uplift the most critical schools," explained Mr. Medard Byarugaba, the District Education Officer. "However, the demand for new classroom structures remains high, and we hope to cover more schools in the upcoming financial year."

The facelift of these five schools marks a significant step toward improving the quality of education in Lyantonde, providing learners with a safer and more supportive environment in which to thrive.



Districts counncillors togetehr with officials from education department duirng a monitoring visit at Kinuuka Primary school on one of rehabiliated classroom block

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WHY WE VOTED AT 18

A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE FROM BUKOMANSIMBI

By Mariam Namutebi, First-Time Voter

When I first heard we would be voting in the local council youth elections, I hesitated. I'm only 18, still in school, and often dismissed as "just a student." But something changed in me the day I stood in line at our polling station, my National ID in one hand and a quiet determination in my heart.

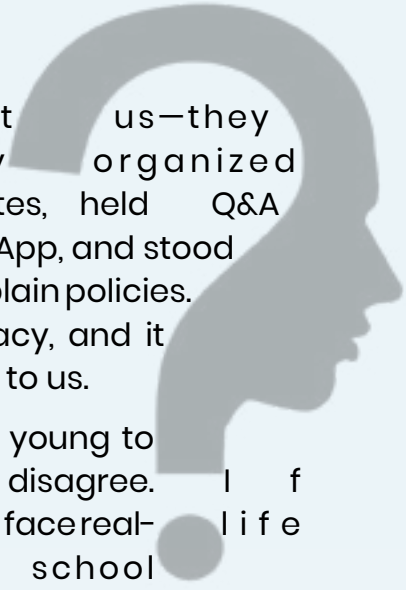
Bukomansimbi has long been considered a quiet district pastoral, peaceful, and politically passive. But on June 19, 2025, that changed. Hundreds of us turned out, many voting for the first time. It wasn't just a civic duty—it was an act of defiance against invisibility.

WE VOTED BECAUSE WE'RE TIRED OF BEING SIDELINED.

We voted because mental health is not a luxury for the privileged it's a daily battle for many young people in our schools and homes.

We voted because we want leaders who don't just campaign with slogans, but listen with intent.

For the first time, youth candidates like Lwambi Eric and Mulyoowa Lydia didn't just talk at us—they talked with us. They organized school debates, held Q&A sessions on WhatsApp, and stood in open fields to explain policies. It felt like democracy, and it felt like it belonged to us.



Some say 18 is too young to decide on leaders. I disagree. If we're old enough to face real-life struggles school dropouts, teen pregnancy, depression, joblessness then we're old enough to demand change.

My classmates and I debated issues days before the vote. Not gossip, not fashion policy. That's the culture that's beginning to grow in Bukomansimbi. Politics is no longer a thing for "the adults." It's ours now too.

At the polling station, I saw a friend who used to mock politics. "This is different," he said. "It feels like we actually matter."

AND WE DO.

This vote wasn't just about who sits on the Youth Council. It was about proving that we are not just the leaders of tomorrow—we are active citizens today.

SO WHY DID WE VOTE AT 18?

Because we're ready. Because we care. And because nobody else can fight for our future better than we can.

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YOUTH RISE IN BUKOMANSIMBI LOCAL COUNCIL POLLS

By Ssali Mike, Communication Officer, Bukomasimbi District

Bukomansimbi, Uganda – June 19, 2025 — A wave of youthful energy swept across Bukomansimbi District on 19th June, 2025 as hundreds of young people turned out to vote in the highly anticipated local council youth elections. The event, held at various polling stations across schools, community centers, and open grounds, marked a pivotal moment in local governance as youth between the ages of 15 and 30 stepped forward to shape the future of their communities.

Candidates such as Lwambi Eric and Nyansiyo were at the forefront of the elections, following weeks of grassroots campaigning. Their platforms focused heavily on issues close to the hearts of young voters, including education reform, increased employment opportunities, and improved access to mental health support.

From early morning, young voters many casting ballots for the first time lined up to make their voices heard. The atmosphere was one of excitement and optimism, punctuated by campaign speeches and open-air debates where candidates shared their visions for a better Bukomansimbi.

> *"This is our chance to be heard," said Mariam Namaganda, a first-time voter. "We want leaders who understand our struggles and are ready to act."*

Community leaders, electoral officials, and volunteers worked throughout the day to ensure the process was free, fair, and accessible. Voter education efforts were evident, as many stations offered guidance on how to cast ballots and understand the roles of elected youth representatives.



Youth lining up to vote for their candidates of choice during the Local Council Youth elections

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The purpose of the elections, according to district officials, was to empower young people and integrate their voices into local decision making structures. The youth councils, once elected, will serve as advisory bodies on matters affecting young populations at various local levels.

As polls closed in the evening, anticipation grew at counting centers where results were awaited. After a thorough tallying process, several candidates emerged victorious, including Mulyoowa Lydia, who was elected Chairperson of the Kayunga LC Youth Council.

In her victory speech, Mulyoowa thanked her supporters and emphasized unity going forward.

> *"This win isn't just mine," she said. "It belongs to all of us. Together, we will work toward a brighter future for every young person in Bukomansimbi District."*

Observers hailed the election as a significant step forward in youth political engagement in Uganda. The peaceful and participatory nature of the event was seen as a model for other districts aiming to involve young citizens in local governance.

The youth elections in Bukomansimbi highlight a growing demand among young people for inclusion in governance. Their high turnout and active participation signal a shift from disengagement to leadership, driven by a desire to address systemic challenges affecting their daily lives. This election not only offered a platform for representation but also sparked a culture of civic responsibility, suggesting a promising future for youth-led development in the region.



Youth lining up to vote for their candidates of choice during the Local Council Youth elections

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THE FUTURE IS NOW: UGANDA'S YOUTH MUST STEP FORWARD IN 2026 ELECTIONS

By Dorah Namwanje, Guest Writer

As Uganda moves toward the 2026 General Elections, a critical truth looms: the youth are not just a demographic majority they are the nation's democratic heartbeat.

With over 73% of Uganda's population under the age of 30, it is impossible to speak of the country's future without speaking of its youth. But here's the catch: it's not about the future anymore. It's about now.

The recently concluded 3rd National Youth Symposium at Makerere University sent a clear message: young Ugandans are ready not to be sidelined, but to lead. Over 300 youth leaders gathered, debated, learned, and graduated from the Uganda Democracy Academy, proving once again that the next generation is not waiting in the wings. They are already center stage. Now, all that remains is one bold move: show up and vote.

Why Voting Matters More Than Ever

There is a myth among many young Ugandans that "my vote won't change anything." It's time to bury that myth. Voting is not just a right it's a declaration. A vote says: I believe in this country. I believe in better leadership. I believe in the power of my generation.

When young people vote, they shift the power dynamic. They elect leaders who represent their values. They hold corrupt systems accountable. They send a signal that politics is not the preserve of the wealthy, the connected, or the over-60s. Every vote cast by a young person is a step toward an inclusive, transparent Uganda.

Government Is Listening Now Youth Must Speak

The government has made youth inclusion a national priority. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has backed youth empowerment programs. Civic education is expanding. Political parties are being challenged to open space for young leaders not just in youth wings, but in executive decisions.

But participation is a two-way street. Structures and policies will mean little if youth do not rise to use them. Elections are your entry point not your endpoint. Be the generation that refuses to be used, divided, or tokenized.

Leadership Is Already in Your Hands

Leadership is not limited to elected office. It's in the student organizing voter education in their university. It's in the community activist

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cleaning up their town. It's in the young entrepreneur solving local problems. Whether you run for LC1 or lead a digital campaign on TikTok, the principle is the same: you are shaping Uganda's direction.

As Rt. Hon. Amama Mbabazi said during the symposium, quoting Amílcar Cabral: "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission fulfill it or betray it."

This is that mission.

Show Up. Speak Out. Step Forward.

As 2026 approaches, here's the challenge: don't just scroll organize. Don't just complain compete. Don't just hope vote.

Uganda does not need a perfect generation. It needs a present one. One that reads, reflects, registers, and rises to the occasion. If democracy is to work, youth must show up not as spectators, but as citizens.

So register. Vote. Run. Build. Lead.

The ballot is your blueprint. The campaign is your classroom. And the future? The future is not waiting—it's calling.

Are you ready to answer?



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COMMUNITY ACCESS ROAD REHABILITATION COMMISSIONED IN LWEMIYAGA SUB-COUNTY

By Namuddu Aminah, Communications Officer, Sembabule District



District Chairperson, Area Councilor, Chief Administrative Officer, and District Engineer during the commissioning of the Lumegere–Makukulu–Mukakoma–Kayonza road

The Government of Uganda has officially commissioned the rehabilitation of 12.4 kilometers of community access roads in Lwemiyaga Sub-county, Sembabule District. This infrastructure project aims to improve rural mobility, enhance agricultural trade, and boost economic activity in the region.

The upgraded road stretches from Lumegere through Makukulu and Mukakoma, ending in Kayonza. It serves as a vital transport link for farming communities in the sub-county. Rehabilitation works will include grading, gravelling, installation of culverts, and drainage improvements to ensure year-round access, even during heavy rains.

The commissioning ceremony was held in Lumegere village and presided over by the District Chairperson, Nkalubo Patrick, representing the Resident District Commissioner, Jane Francis Kagayi. The event attracted district officials, local leaders, technical staff, and community members, who gathered to witness the launch of this significant development initiative.

In his address, Chairperson Nkalubo emphasized that the project supports the Government's broader efforts to modernize rural infrastructure and improve service delivery under the Uganda Road Fund and the Parish Development Model. He highlighted the impact poor road conditions have had on rural farmers, especially in increasing input costs and limiting market access. "Roads noticeably drive up the transaction costs of agricultural produce," he noted. "This project will provide a lasting solution."

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Sembabule District is a major agricultural hub, with nearly 500 trucks transporting maize daily from areas such as Ntuusi and Lwemiyaga to major trading centers like Kampala, Masaka, Mpigi, Kyotera, Malaba, and Mutukula. The improved road is expected to reduce freight costs and stabilize prices, allowing local farmers to benefit more from their harvests.

Area Councilor Sebugwawo Julius noted that infrastructure improvements have already encouraged agro-processing in the district. Over the past few years, new milk coolers, maize mills, and coffee hullers have been established across the area. "There were only around 20 milk coolers, but now many more have been put in place, supporting a wider range of agricultural enterprises," he remarked.

Local farmers and traders welcomed the road rehabilitation as a timely and vital investment, especially with the peak harvest season approaching. They pointed out that the upgraded road would reduce produce spoilage, improve access to health and education services, and strengthen Lwemiyaga's integration into the regional economy.

District Engineer Konde Stanley reported that the road rehabilitation is funded by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), through the National Oilseeds Project (NOSP). Implemented by the Ministry of Local Government, the project is designed to increase production and productivity, strengthen value chain competitiveness, and promote environmental sustainability. It also focuses on improving livelihoods for marginalized populations, particularly women and youth.

The project is valued at UGX 1,120,677,544 and is expected to be completed within eight months. The works are being carried out by Lusa Construction and Engineering Company Ltd.

To ensure the road's long-term sustainability, Chairperson Nkalubo tasked the district engineering department with routine maintenance. He also called for the formation of community road gangs to maintain the road locally. "We must take ownership of this infrastructure. Without community involvement, the benefits will be short-lived," he warned.

He concluded by underscoring the importance of infrastructure to rural development. "In Uganda's countryside, better roads mean lower input costs, faster access to markets, and greater opportunities for income generation. These are the building blocks of socio-economic transformation," he said.



District Chairperson breaking ground to officially launch the road works

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