

# Katonga Post

District Communicators'  
Newsletter

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Weekly Edition

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*"Your Trusted Weekly Source from South & Central Buganda"*



Feature Story

President Museveni touring Rashida Namubiru's Coffee plantation, of Butambala District

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## Editor's Note

### Welcome to this week's edition of the Katonga Post.

We are growing and growing steadily and we're incredibly grateful to each and every one of you who is walking this journey with us. Your support fuels our mission, and your encouragement keeps us going. A special word of appreciation goes out to our dedicated communication officers. Your commitment and excellence do not go unnoticed. Thank you for your tireless efforts we see you, we appreciate you, and we are cheering you on!

In this edition, we bring you highlights from the President's recent visit, a momentous event that reflects both national attention and local impact. We also cover:

- The launch of the Youth Empowerment Program, aimed at equipping young leaders with practical skills for the future.
- The successful completion of

the Katonga Health Outreach, which provided much-needed services to hundreds in the community.

- A spotlight on local innovation, where we meet individuals and groups transforming everyday challenges into inspiring solutions.

You'll find these and many more stories inside this edition. We hope they inform, inspire, and ignite new ideas within our vibrant community.

As we reflect on progress and purpose, this quote comes to mind:

“ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.” — HELEN KELLER

Thank you for being part of the Katonga Post family.

Warm regards,

**Editor**  
**Katonga Post**



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9. Muwonge Baker - Kalungu
10. Ssali Mike - Bukomansimbi

## INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*“Before the Parish Development Model, life was extremely difficult. If I had a problem of Shs100,000, I couldn’t solve it. That’s how helpless I was. I lived in fear of even the smallest emergency,”*



**Ms. Rashida Namubiru PDM beneficiary**



*Hajji Zziwa and his Wife interacting with the President at their farm*

## HOW UGX 1 MILLION PDM MONEY TRANSFORMED LIFE OF BUTAMBALA RESIDENT

*By Editorial Team*

**P**resident Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on 16th June, 2025 resumed his countrywide Parish Development Model (PDM) assessment tour, this time focusing on Greater Mpigi.

Among the lives touched by this PDM initiative, is that of Ms. Rashida Namubiru, a resident of Butambala District.

Once defined by hardship and uncertainty, Ms. Namubiru's life took a dramatic turn when she received Shs1m through the PDM.

The President visited her home in Kasaka Village, Gombe Ward, where he witnessed firsthand the results of strategic empowerment.

Ms. Namubiru is a wife to Mr. Muhamood

Kasule, a mother of eight children, six of her own and two belonging to her late sister. For years, her life was defined by struggle.

*“Before the Parish Development Model, life was extremely difficult. If I had a problem of Shs100,000, I couldn't solve it. That's how helpless I was. I lived in fear of even the smallest emergency,” she said.*

One day, parish chiefs arrived in her village and began sensitizing residents about the Parish Development Model, a government initiative aimed at helping Ugandans transition from subsistence to market-oriented farming.

She mentioned that some villagers



dismissed it, thinking it was just more unfulfilled promises. But Namubiru listened and believed.

"They trained us, told us about enterprise groups and how to apply. We formed one called the Kasaka Goat Rearing Group, with eight members. We filled the forms, attended the training at Gombe Parish and waited," she noted.

"I was at home when I received a message on my phone. It said I had received Shs1 million from Gombe PDM SACCO. My hands started shaking. I couldn't believe it. I thought it was a mistake, maybe even a scam," Ms. Namubiru recalled.

"In my entire life, I had never held Shs1m in my hands, not at once, not even in a dream. I called the LC1 chairman to confirm if it was real. He told me, 'Yes, it is true. That's the money from the President, through PDM', I started crying. That was the first time I felt truly seen by my country," the beneficiary said.

*"I held that money and made a promise to myself that it will not go to waste. This money is going to change my life."*

Determined to invest wisely, she traveled to Kibibi Town Council and bought three young female goats at Shs 250,000 each, and one male goat at Shs 150,000 spending a total of Shs900,000. With the remaining Shs94,000, she built a temporary shelter for the animals.

"I had no background in goat rearing, but I started doing research, asking questions, and learning every day. I knew this was my chance," she said.

Five months later, all three female goats conceived and gave birth to three kids

each. Her herd quickly grew to more than 10 goats. When veterinary officers visited, they encouraged her to build a stronger structure for the animals.

She sold two of the young goats for Shs 400,000 and used the money to build a permanent, self-contained shelter.

Using manure from her growing herd, Ms. Namubiru enriched her coffee and banana plantations.

The impact was immediate. In the past, she would earn just Shs500,000 per season from two bags of coffee. Now she recently made Shs1.7 million from the same garden.

"With that money, I bought a cow. And with the remaining Shs700,000, I did something that had haunted me for years. I took my son back to school. He had stopped at Senior Four because we had no money. Now he's studying a course at Namasuba College of Commerce."

"PDM has restored my dignity. I'm no longer a beggar. I'm a contributor, a farmer, a mother who can now educate her child," she said.

Ms. Namubiru now owns eight goats, one cow, a coffee plantation, bananas, and a piece of land, with her home all sustained through her hard work.

*"I want to be a model farmer. I want people to come and learn from me. I haven't sold my goats because I want to multiply them. This is only the beginning."*

To those who think the PDM is only for the elite or supporters of a particular party, Ms. Namubiru is clear.

"This money is not for NRM, or any political group. It is for all Ugandans:

Muslims, Catholics, Protestants, people of every tribe, every religion. Anyone who thinks otherwise will be left behind while we are moving forward,” she said.

She also urged the government to continue and expand the program.

“PDM should reach millions of more people. It has changed my life, and it can change so many others. I am a living proof of what Shs 1 million invested in the right hands can do,” she said.

On his part, President Museveni hailed Ms. Namubiru’s achievements as a shining example of the success the PDM program was designed to foster.

“You know that parable of the sower, the crowd gathered to welcome him. “Some seeds fell on rocky ground, some on the road, but some fell on good soil and bore fruit. Rashida reminds me of this parable because of her hard work,” the President said.

Moved by her effort and entrepreneurial spirit, the President announced personal support.

“She has gotten the courage to develop. I will ask my people and buy her more acres of land. She also mentioned transportation. I will contribute Shs 12 million to get her a tuk-tuk,” he said.

Speaking directly to the people of Butambala, President Museveni used Namubiru’s success to illustrate the purpose of the Parish Development Model, a government program that injects Shs100 million per year into each parish to support household-level wealth creation.

*“This money is not for the government, it is yours. Use that money, and after 24 months, return it to your SACCO so that others can borrow. We are thinking of increasing it to Shs 200 million per parish.”*

President Museveni also emphasized that he had rejected bank charges on PDM funds, ensuring that every eligible beneficiary receives the full Shs1 million.

“The government will cater for those charges. All PDM beneficiaries must



*Residents attend a meeting with the President*

get Shs1 million,” he insisted. The President reflected on his long-standing campaign to combat poverty, tracing it back to the 1960s in the Ankole region, where he encouraged pastoralists to embrace settled farming and adopt dairy practices.

*“My vision was clear to empower communities through modern farming and entrepreneurship. The Ankole people embraced my message of wealth creation, and today the region has transformed,” he said.*

From Entandikwa, to NAADS, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), Emyooga, and now PDM, President Museveni underscored that all these efforts stem from a single goal: to lift Ugandans out of poverty.

He also spoke about the importance of ‘ekibaro’ economic logic in choosing the right enterprise based on land size and potential. He said whether it’s dairy, poultry, fish farming, coffee, fruits, or cocoa, the key is to make it count.

“Even one acre can employ up to 15 people. Uganda has 40 million acres suitable for agriculture. If we use just 7 million effectively, we can create 105 million jobs, more than double of Uganda’s population.”

As he concluded his visit, the President expressed optimism in the rising spirit of entrepreneurship and self-reliance across the country.

“I am happy to see that you people have woken up and are working towards eliminating poverty. Let no one misuse this PDM money, it is a treasure for your future. Fight poverty and create wealth. The time is now,” he said.

The event was also attended by the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Denis Hamson Obua, the Minister of State for Investment and Privatisation, Hon. Evelyn Anite, State House Comptroller, Ms. Jane Barekye, among others.



Some of the enterprises for PDM beneficiaries



# BUKANGO SEED SCHOOL: TRANSFORMING RURAL EDUCATION IN BUKOMANSIMBI

*By Ssali Mike, Communication  
Officer, Bukomansimbi District*

In Bukango village, Bukomansimbi District, Bukango Seed School is transforming access to education for hundreds of rural learners. Once a place where students dropped out or walked long distances for secondary school, the village is now home to a thriving government-funded institution that is improving academic outcomes and revitalizing the community.

Launched five years ago as part of a national strategy to bridge the education gap in rural Uganda, Bukango Seed School has become a quiet revolution in public service delivery.

Uganda's 2024 National Population

and Housing Census puts the country's population at 45.9 million, with over 75% living in rural areas. Literacy remains uneven 73% nationally, but with lower outcomes among girls and in poorer regions. For decades, children in Bukomansimbi were among those left behind. Secondary schools were distant, private options too expensive, and public institutions under-resourced.

It was this context that informed the Seed School initiative a government program aimed at establishing fully subsidized secondary schools in underserved sub-counties. Under the stewardship of the Ministry of Education and Sports and backed by the NRM government, seed schools were to serve as the backbone of Uganda's universal secondary education agenda.

*“We were watching children drop out after Primary Seven,” said Margaret Nankya, the school's headteacher. “Now, they stay in school—and they thrive.”*

When it opened, Bukango Seed School enrolled just 50 students. Today, that



Bukango Seed School blocks



number has quadrupled, with over 200 students now in attendance.

Facilities are modest but efficient. Classrooms are stocked with textbooks provided by the government. Students receive at least one nutritious meal a day. Importantly, the school employs trained teachers who are paid through the national payroll ensuring consistency and accountability.

The school's academic performance has steadily improved, with Bukango students outscoring their peers from nearby private schools in the most recent UCE exams.

Parents who once hesitated to invest in education now rally around the school. "This has changed our village," said Sarah Namutebi, a mother of three. "My children dream of becoming doctors and teachers. That would not have happened before."

Bukango runs a school garden, where students grow maize, beans, and vegetables, learning both agricultural science and self-reliance. Produce from the garden supplements school meals and teaches conservation.

The school also organizes regular community workshops, focusing on parenting, health, and sanitation. Parents and elders are invited into decision-making spaces a rarity in many public institutions.

"This is what NDP IV envisions community-led development

anchored in education," said John Musoke, the Bukomansimbi District Education Officer, referring to the Fourth National Development Plan, which prioritizes human capital development and inclusive education access.

Uganda's investment in seed schools aligns with broader goals under Vision 2040 and Agenda 2030. With youth unemployment at 50.9% among those aged 18–30, education is seen as the only sustainable path to growth.

Under NDP IV, the government has committed to expanding access, equity, and quality of education at all levels a theme clearly reflected in Bukango's success story.

And the results speak for themselves. The school now serves as a model, inspiring plans to expand the seed school network across Bukomansimbi's sub-counties. District leaders are advocating for similar schools in Butenga, Kitanda, and Kibinge, noting that demand has outpaced supply.

*"I don't think we fully realized what this school would become," said Headteacher Nankya, reflecting on the early days. "It's not just a school. It's a turning point."*

# GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTS STRATEGIC WATER INFRASTRUCTURE TO ADDRESS KALANGALA'S SUPPLY GAPS

*By: Ntabaazi Geoffrey Nsumba, Communications Officer, Kalangala*

**D**espite being surrounded by the vast waters of Lake Victoria, Kalangala District has long grappled with water scarcity. Through strategic interventions led by the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Government through Ministry of Water and Environment is implementing water infrastructure projects aimed at delivering clean, safe, and reliable water to the island communities.

In recent years, the ministry has launched several landmark water infrastructure projects aimed at expanding access to clean and safe drinking water for island communities. Central among these is the construction of gravity flow water systems that harness the natural topography of Kalangala to deliver piped water without the need for electricity an innovative and sustainable solution for the district's remote and hilly terrain.

One such initiative, the Dajje Gravity Flow Scheme, currently under construction in Bujumba Sub-county's Dajje Parish, is valued at over UGX 100 million. Once complete, the system will supply safe water to hundreds of households, reducing reliance on contaminated water sources and significantly lowering the risk of waterborne diseases such as cholera, typhoid, dysentery, and bilharzia.

Over the past decade, Kalangala District has benefited substantially from conditional water grants provided by the central government and its development partners. These funds have facilitated the rollout of major water supply and sanitation infrastructure, directly improving the lives of residents.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment, "safe water and sanitation coverage in Kalangala now



*Dajje Gravity Flow Scheme tanks*

stands at 70% overall,” with “Kalangala Town Council at a remarkable 97%”. However, the ministry acknowledges that “challenges persist in some remote sub-counties, such as Kyamuswa, where access hovers around 67%”.

In addition to water access, the government is also investing in sanitation infrastructure. A recent example is the construction of a five-stance waterborne toilet in Buyiri, Bujumba Sub-county part of a broader effort to promote hygiene and curb the spread of disease.

Further enhancing the district’s resilience, solar-powered water systems are being implemented in areas such as Kachugwa. These projects not only increase water supply reliability but also align with national efforts to promote sustainable, green technologies.

The impact of these projects is far-reaching. “Schools are now able to provide students with clean water, improving hygiene and attendance,” said a local education official.

“Health centers, once hampered by erratic water supply, can now operate with greater confidence and efficiency.” Households across the district are beginning to thrive, no longer burdened by the constant threat of waterborne illness.

Residents have expressed deep gratitude for the commitment of President Yoweri Museveni and the Ministry of Water and Environment. “Their leadership has turned the tides for Kalangala,” said one community elder.

As expansion efforts continue, particularly in underserved areas, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to achieving universal access to safe water and sanitation.

While the spotlight is often on water systems, sanitation infrastructure is equally critical in reducing disease spread. Government has not focused on availing clean water but has also constructed a five-stance waterborne toilet in Buyiri, Bujumba Sub-county to promote hygiene.



*The Chief Administrative officer (Mr. Ssemwogerere Fredrick) during the monitoring exercise*



# GOVERNMENT INSTILLS HOPE IN KIZIBA COMMUNITY, EQUIPS KIZIBA HEALTH CENTRE III

*By Musisi Ssessanga, Communication Officer, Rakai District*

**R**AKAI, UGANDA – Residents of Kiziba in Rakai District are celebrating renewed hope following the government's official equipping of Kiziba Health Centre III with essential medical tools and supplies on Thursday, June 5. The development is expected to significantly improve healthcare service delivery in one of the district's most remote and underserved areas.

This milestone follows the health facility's elevation to Health Centre III status during the 2019/2020 Financial Year, which also included the construction of a new maternity ward and renovation of the existing Outpatient Department (OPD) block.

According to Dr. Sakor Moses, the Rakai District Health Officer, the government invested UGX 119,433,145 in the project through LOSAN LOGISTICS Ltd, the contractor. The funding and equipment were provided under the Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers (UGIFT) Programme of the Ministry of Health.

Dr. Sakor confirmed that the health centre has now been furnished with critical medical equipment for maternity services, outpatient care, and laboratory work. These improvements are expected to reduce referrals to Rakai Hospital, which is located far away and accessible

only by poorly maintained roads.

"We have provided this health unit with what it needs to operate effectively as a Health Centre III," said Dr. Sakor. "This includes maternity beds, diagnostic tools, oxygen concentrators, and lab equipment a major step forward in making healthcare more accessible."

Established in the early 1990s as a Health Centre II to serve the then Kiziba Parish in Kyalulungira Sub-county, the facility has long struggled with limited resources. The region's remote, hilly terrain and unreliable roads, especially during the rainy season, have made access to health services a persistent challenge.

Dr. Mulema Derick, the officer in charge of the health centre, expressed optimism about the recent upgrades.

"This is a great relief for the people of Kiziba and neighbouring areas," he said. "We now have the capacity to manage primary health care and handle some complications that we previously had to refer to Rakai Hospital."

Dr. Mulema noted that the health centre currently serves an average of 40 outpatients daily and about 35 women seeking maternal health services. Its catchment area includes Mweruka Town Council, Kiziba Town Council, and Kiziba Sub-county—two of which

still lack Health Centre III facilities.

*“Transport remains a major barrier,” he added. “On bad days, patients fail to reach the hospital, and some resort to alternative treatments.”*

When Katonga Post visited the facility on Monday, June 16, Ms. Katushabe Jane, a health worker on duty, was attending to more than 30 outpatients.

Maternity care—which had long been the most affected by healthcare gaps in Kiziba—has seen a notable transformation. Ms. Babirye Barbra, the midwife in charge of maternal health, expressed gratitude for the newly supplied equipment.

“We now have proper beds, a diagnostic kit, and an oxygen concentrator. These are lifesaving,” she said. “In the past, many mothers couldn’t afford transport to Rakai Hospital and ended up with Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), which is extremely risky, especially for HIV-positive women.”

Babirye shared a recent success story: a mother in the area safely delivered triplets at the health centre without the need for referral—an outcome that would have been impossible just weeks earlier.

“That mother might not have reached the hospital in time. Thanks to the new equipment, we managed the delivery successfully here,” she said. “Even premature births, which we used to refer, can now be handled locally.”

Despite the progress, Babirye raised concerns about the maternity ward’s solar power system, which is proving unreliable.

“Sometimes the lights go off in the middle of the night. That’s dangerous during deliveries. We urgently need a more reliable solar backup or connection to the power grid,” she appealed.

Additionally, Ms. Katushabe Jane highlighted the lack of staff accommodation as a persistent challenge.

*“No staff quarters were constructed. That makes it hard for us to stay close to the facility, especially when responding to emergencies at night,” she noted.*

Despite these outstanding issues, the overall mood in the community is one of optimism. The government’s intervention has not only brought health services closer to the people but also restored public trust in the healthcare system.



*Maternity ward at Kiziba HC III*

# HEALTH WORKERS URGED TO STEP UP EFFORTS TO CURB M-POX OUTBREAK IN KYOTERA

*By Ambrose Musasizi, Communications Officer, Kyotera District*

The District Health Officer for Kyotera, Dr. Edward Muwanga, has called on health workers to intensify community sensitization efforts in response to a growing outbreak of M-pox in the district. The disease has seen a marked increase in cases in recent weeks, raising concerns among public health officials.

Speaking during a recent meeting with health personnel, Dr. Muwanga emphasized the urgent need for collective action to stem the spread of the disease.

“As health workers, you are on the front lines of this fight,” he stated. “It is essential that you educate the public on the risks, symptoms, and most importantly, the preventive measures against M-pox.”

Mr. Emax Kintu, the District Health Educator, highlighted ongoing efforts to vaccinate high-risk populations, including bar attendants and sex workers. However, he noted that these measures need to be expanded to reach a broader segment of the community.

Despite their dedication, many



*Health Workers arrive at Kasensero landing site where they vaccinated 800 people against M-Pox Recently*



health workers report facing critical challenges due to limited resources. They cite a lack of essential equipment and inadequate facilities, which not only hinder the quality of care for suspected cases but also expose frontline workers to increased risk of infection.

In response to these concerns, the Acting Chief Administrative Officer of Kyotera, Mr. Muhammad Nfitimukiza, reaffirmed the district's commitment to supporting health workers.

*"We recognize the vital role health workers play in this outbreak response," he said. "The district is committed to providing the necessary equipment and supplies to facilitate effective community outreach and treatment."*

The outbreak, initially contained within certain localities, has now begun to

spread to other parts of the district, heightening the urgency of the health sector's response. Community sensitization has become a top priority, with health workers being urged to adopt a multi-pronged approach promoting vaccination, encouraging early reporting of symptoms, and reinforcing hygiene practices.

To support these efforts, the district health team has developed and begun distributing educational materials such as posters, flyers, and brochures. These will be disseminated across health centers, markets, and other public venues to maximize public awareness.

Active participation in public education and frontline response by the health workers will be crucial to preventing further transmission and ensuring timely treatment for those affected.

## KALUNGU DISTRICT RECORDS MAJOR SUCCESS IN ELIMINATING CHILD LABOUR FROM COFFEE FARMS

*By Muwonge Baker Communication officer Kalungu District*

**K**alungu District has recorded significant success in its fight to eliminate child labour in the coffee value chain. A collaborative project launched in partnership with UNICEF, the European Union (EU), and the International Labour Organization (ILO) has dramatically reduced child exploitation across the district's key coffee producing regions.

The initiative, which ran from September 2024 to May 2025, was led by the Kalungu District Community-Based Services Department and focused particularly on Lwabenge and Kyamulibwa sub-counties Kalungu's highest-yielding coffee zones. However, interventions reached all seven lower local governments (LLGs), reflecting a district-wide commitment

to protecting children's rights.

According to Ms. Ritah Ruzena, the District Community Development Officer (DCDO), the program successfully removed 85% of children previously involved in exploitative labour and reintegrated them into supportive environments.

"We implemented a multi-faceted approach," said Ms. Ruzena, "combining education, psychosocial support, and vocational training to ensure comprehensive rehabilitation."

Among the program's notable achievements was the successful withdrawal of children in 85% of the 74 documented child labour cases, which included children engaged in farming, domestic work, and construction. The district also trained 175 para-social workers and local council leaders in child protection, equipping them with essential skills to identify and respond to abuse cases.

Through extensive community outreach, over 7,400 households were visited, resulting in the identification of 864 child protection cases. Public awareness efforts included radio talk shows, school sensitization sessions, community dialogues, and village-level meetings.

The initiative also addressed the needs of out-of-school youth. Forty adolescents received life skills training—five of whom have since returned to formal education,

while others enrolled in vocational programs such as tailoring, electrical installation, and construction. Additionally, 40 model parents were trained in positive parenting to foster safer home environments.

An analysis of the identified child labour cases revealed that 45% were linked to coffee farming, where children were found engaging in hazardous tasks such as spraying chemicals, harvesting, and transporting coffee beans. Other forms of child labour included domestic chores (22%), commercial activities (16%), and subsistence farming.

Mr. Brian Kasumba, a Probation Officer in Kalungu, emphasized the importance of this data in guiding future efforts:

"This is a wake-up call," he said. "We now know where to focus our energies especially in agricultural hotspots and how best to work with families and communities to keep children safe."

Despite the progress, the program faced several challenges. Some community members resisted the initiative, often due to confusion between child labour and age-appropriate child participation. Para-social workers encountered threats, especially when handling sensitive cases such as defilement, prompting the district to enhance safety and confidentiality protocols.

Logistical issues also hampered field operations. Heavy rains, coupled

with a lack of protective gear like gumboots and raincoats, impeded mobility. Financial limitations affected transportation, healthcare, and school reintegration efforts.

Kalungu District authorities are now appealing to the government and development partners for continued support, especially in sustaining the initiative's gains and equipping frontline workers.

"This program not only protects our children but also safeguards the integrity of our coffee industry," said Mr. Kasumba. "We are deeply grateful to UNICEF, the EU, and the ILO, as well as to our para-social workers, Community Development Officers, teachers, and community volunteers who have made this achievement possible."

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS URGED TO EMBRACE LED STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

*By Musisi Ssessanga –  
Communication Officer, Rakai*

**R**AKAI, UGANDA – Local governments across Uganda have been urged to adopt and implement the Local Economic Development (LED) strategy to harness available resources, boost revenue generation, and improve service delivery at the grassroots level.

This call was made on Wednesday, June 11, by Faisal Kikulukuunyu Ssali, Commissioner at the Ministry of Local Government, during a training

session for members of the Rakai District Local Economic Development and Investment Committee (LEDIC) held at the district headquarters.

Ssali stressed that over reliance on central government funding is no longer sustainable, noting that national budget allocations are increasingly insufficient. He encouraged local governments to shift focus toward identifying and utilizing their own local assets such as land, skilled labour, and natural resources to initiate viable economic ventures.

"We must accept that funds from Kampala are either not enough or are steadily decreasing. Yet, we are mandated to deliver meaningful services to our people. This means we must look around, identify what we have, and put it to use. That's where LEDIC comes in," Ssali explained.

The LED concept, formalized in 2022 and rolled out nationally in 2023, promotes a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, the



private sector, and communities. Its core aim is to foster collaboration in identifying economic opportunities and developing sustainable strategies for resource mobilization and investment.

Under the LED framework, each district is required to establish a Local Economic Development and Investment Committee (LEDIC). These committees consist of departmental heads and representatives from the private sector, media, academia, and development partners. Their role is to identify local economic potential, propose interventions, and guide the formulation of strategic development plans.

Ssali emphasized that LED is not a standalone government program but a cross-cutting strategy to be mainstreamed into district development plans and budgets. He underscored the importance of stakeholder collaboration and urged local governments to develop comprehensive district profiles that highlight potential investment opportunities.

"The private sector has the capital, the media has the platform to publicize opportunities, and the community offers labour and ideas. When these forces come together under LEDIC, we can drive real development. The LED approach is about converting potential into enterprise," he said.

He also called for decentralization of LED efforts to the lower local government levels, suggesting that sub-county chiefs spearhead the grassroots implementation.

*"The essence of LED is investment and development. It's about how we uplift the standard of*

*living in our communities. LEDICs must be empowered to identify bankable projects that can attract funding and investment," he added.*

Ssali noted that with proper structure and management, LEDICs could become influential enough to shape national-level policy and attract high-level attention, even from Permanent Secretaries.

Speaking at the same event, Ms. Katusabe Beatrice, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Rakai District, welcomed the LED initiative and emphasized Rakai's urgent need for localized economic development.

"Frankly, we need LED more than the Ministry of Local Government does. Rakai is rich in resources such as land, agricultural products, and human capital but we need investment to add value. We are calling upon the Ministry to connect us with investors who can work with our local communities," she said.

She also encouraged the private sector to actively engage with the LEDIC framework.

*"Our private sector should not be quiet. They need to present proposals, showcase their innovations, and work with the committee to turn ideas into impactful projects," she added.*

Amidst growing financial and developmental challenges, the adoption of the LED model offers a timely and practical pathway for districts like Rakai to stimulate homegrown economic transformation and sustainable growth.

# LYANTONDE RESIDENTS REAP LIFE-SAVING GAINS FROM SAFE WATER SAVES LIVES (SCIF) INITIATIVE

*By Wilson Kutamba , Communication Officer, Lyantonde District*

**R**esidents of Lyantonde District are celebrating a major leap in public health and community resilience, thanks to the Safe Water Saves Lives project an initiative funded by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine through the Sustainable Climate Impact Fund (SCIF).

Since its launch in 2022, the project has restored dozens of water sources, trained local maintenance teams, and empowered communities to take ownership of their water supply systems. Operating across all six sub-counties and two town councils in Lyantonde, the program is already being hailed as a model for sustainable rural water development.

The SCIF initiative focuses on more than just drilling boreholes it promotes long-term functionality and environmental protection. According to Charles Kizito, SCIF Project Officer, the approach hinges on community involvement.

“Sustainable access to clean water begins with local empowerment,” Kizito told participants at a recent training session in Kaliiro Town Council. “We are equipping water user committees with the knowledge to manage, protect, and monitor their boreholes.”

To date, 23 boreholes have been

rehabilitated under the project, with nine located in Kaliiro Sub-county alone. One of the flagship achievements is the motorisation of the Lwamawungu borehole, which now serves hundreds of residents with a consistent water supply.

Before SCIF’s intervention, many residents were forced to rely on expensive water vendors. John Bosco Ssendagire, LCI Chairperson of Kasambya village in Kabatema Parish, said access to clean water was not just a challenge, but a financial burden.

*“People used to pay between Shs 1,000 and 2,000 for just one 20-litre jerrycan of water,” he said. “Now, over 210 households around 3,000 people get clean water free of charge.”*

To maintain this progress, the project has trained local hand pump mechanics, who are provided with toolkits, motorcycles, and monthly stipends to conduct regular maintenance and quickly respond to breakdowns.

*“It’s not just about installing boreholes,” Kizito emphasized. “We must ensure they remain functional every single day.”*

The ripple effects are being felt across public health and safety. Annet

Nakayovu, a water user committee member in Kaliiro, noted that the clean water access has dramatically reduced incidences of waterborne diseases.

“We used to see so many cases of typhoid, diarrhoea, and even skin infections,” she said. “Now, those numbers have dropped sharply. Malaria cases have also declined.”

Nakayovu also highlighted how the project has helped protect young girls and women who previously risked harassment on long treks to unsafe water sources.

*“Children no longer have to walk for miles. It’s safer, especially for girls. This project has restored both health and dignity,” she added.*

education into its programming, encouraging communities to protect tree cover near water sources.

“We’re discouraging deforestation and promoting tree planting near boreholes to safeguard the water chain,” Kizito explained.

The project has drawn praise from local government officials. Jane Kareiga, Sub-county Chief of Kaliiro, called it a “game changer for rural public health and social well-being.”

With an estimated budget of £400,000 (roughly UGX 2 billion), the SCIF project is also being implemented in Kalungu and Kabarole districts, setting a regional precedent for climate-resilient water solutions.

SCIF has also woven environmental



*Mr Charles Kizito SCIF project officer inspecting rehabilitated boreholes*



# LWENGO DISTRICT HANDS OVER 20 IRAS DEVICES TO SUB-COUNTIES TO BOOST LOCAL REVENUE COLLECTION

*By Ssekabira Peters, Communication Officer, Lwengo District*

**L**wengo District on Friday, June 13, 2025, officially handed over 20 Integrated Revenue Administration System (IRAS) devices to all its sub-counties to enhance local revenue mobilization.

These efforts aim to modernize and streamline revenue collection in response to the growing demand for greater transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public financial management.

The IRAS is a government-initiated mobile application rolled out nationwide to support the registration, assessment, and payment of local taxes, particularly targeting small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Its adoption is part of a broader government initiative to improve service delivery and accountability through digital transformation in local governance.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, the District's Chief Financial Officer, CPA Sserwada Paul, expressed appreciation for the government's support in leveraging technology for revenue collection.

"We are grateful to the central government for introducing the IRAS system. It is a timely intervention that will help us address the longstanding issues of revenue loss due to inefficiencies and, at times, outright misappropriation," said CPA Sserwada.

"With IRAS, we now have a tool that tracks revenue from its source through assessment to the final payment."

So far in the 2024/2025 financial year, Lwengo District has collected UGX 750 million in local revenue a commendable achievement. However, district leaders are optimistic that the introduction of IRAS will significantly boost revenue performance.

The target for the upcoming financial year is set at over UGX 1 billion, with plans to expand the local revenue base through improved compliance and enforcement mechanisms enabled by the platform.

IRAS offers real-time data on all revenue transactions, empowering district leaders to monitor progress and make evidence-based decisions. It also simplifies the process for taxpayers, who can now register their businesses, assess dues, and make payments using their mobile phones or through authorized agents.

Mr. Kibira, Chairperson of Kingo Sub-county, welcomed the initiative, noting that it would reduce administrative bottlenecks and ease the burden on local revenue officers.

**"Our people want services, but we need revenue to provide them. With IRAS, we will collect**

*more, spend better, and build stronger communities,” he said.*

District leadership, however, acknowledged that the system’s success will hinge on proper sensitization and training of both technical staff and the general public. Plans are underway to conduct a series of capacity-building workshops to ensure that all stakeholders understand and effectively use the system.

With robust revenue collection mechanisms now in place, Lwengo District is better positioned to finance its development priorities independently, reducing reliance on central government transfers. District leaders are calling on all citizens particularly business operators to embrace the new system, pay their taxes promptly, and contribute to building a stronger, more self-reliant Lwengo.

## MASAKA ELDERLY RECEIVE SOCIAL GRANTS FOR OCTOBER–DECEMBER CYCLE

*By Augustine Bukululu – Communications Officer, Masaka*

**H**undreds of elderly beneficiaries in Masaka District and Masaka City have received their long-awaited Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) payments, bringing much-needed relief and renewed hope to many households.

The disbursements, which covered the October to December 2024 cycle, were successfully carried out between March 2024 and April 2025. Alongside the payments, verification, registration, and enrollment exercises were conducted to update the SAGE Management Information System (MIS). During this process, biometric data such as fingerprints and photographs were captured for beneficiaries who previously lacked them.



*Nakijoba Irene Justine (sitting in middle) the focal person for elders chatting with the elders while receiving funds*

Stella Kanyesigye, Coordinator of the Kampala Regional Technical Support Unit under the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, collaborated with the Masaka District Local Government and Centenary Bank, the designated Payment Service Provider, to ensure the smooth execution of the exercise.

Nakijoba Iren Justine, Senior Labour Officer and SAGE focal person for Masaka District, reported that a total of 792 elderly persons 302 males and 490 females received payments in the district. This reflects a slight decrease from the 796 beneficiaries paid during the previous cycle. In contrast, Masaka City saw an increase, with 773 beneficiaries (255 males and 518 females), up from 720 in the last cycle. Buwunga Sub-county (in the district) and Kimanya-Kabonera Division (in the city) recorded the highest number of recipients.

Nakijoba further noted that a total of UGX 74.36 million was disbursed in Masaka District, while UGX 78.66 million was paid out in Masaka City. She clarified that these figures represent payments made at designated sub-county points and may not fully reflect the actual number of older persons residing in each area, as beneficiaries are allowed to receive payments from any location.

The recent exercise also enrolled 32 new elderly persons into the SAGE program 14 from Masaka District and 18 from Masaka City. Divisions like Kimanya-Kabonera



and Nyendo-Mukungwe led in new registrations. However, some areas saw no new enrollments due to limited mobilization and lack of awareness.

Despite these achievements, several challenges persist. Nakijoba highlighted low reporting of deaths, particularly in urban areas like Nyendo-Mukungwe, where family members are often reluctant to report deaths for fear of losing access to the funds. A total of 33 deaths were reported in the district and 22 in the city, though Nakijoba believes the actual numbers are likely higher.

There are also concerns about untraceable beneficiaries with high account balances especially



in Masaka City raising questions about data accuracy and ongoing eligibility. Kimanya-Kabonera was noted as having multiple such cases.

Adding to the challenges, Nakijoba cited delayed communication from the Ministry regarding the payment schedule, which hampers timely mobilization of beneficiaries, particularly in remote areas like Bukakata. Poor internet connectivity in these regions further complicates digital enrollment and verification, slowing down the process.

Nevertheless, Nakijoba praised the government for its continued support of the SAGE program, calling it a transformative initiative that has restored dignity to many older persons.

*“This initiative has changed lives. Many of our elders now have the means to buy essentials and live with dignity. We are grateful to the government for this continued support,” she said.*

Nakijoba urged community members and local leaders to encourage eligible

older persons to enroll in the program.

“Let’s ensure that no eligible older person is left behind,” she emphasized.

She also appealed to families and communities to be more proactive in reporting deaths and upholding the program’s integrity, noting that efficient service delivery depends on accurate and timely data.

Nakijoba concluded by announcing that the next round of SAGE payments will begin this week, reaffirming the government’s commitment to building an inclusive and responsive social protection system.

One of the beneficiaries, Paskazia Namakula, from Buliro Village in Kyesiga Sub-county, expressed gratitude for the support:

*“This money helps me meet my basic needs and has improved my living conditions. I thank the government and Masaka District for this vital support that brings relief to my life and to many other elders.”*



*Nakijoba Irene Justine (standing) sensitising elders before receiving funds*

# MINISTRY OF HEALTH EQUIPS KYOTERA CHEWS WITH VITAL TOOLS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

*By Ambrose Musasizi, Communications Officer – Kyotera District*

**K**YOTERA, UGANDA – The Ministry of Health has handed over essential working materials to Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs) in Kyotera District, reinforcing efforts to expand access to primary healthcare in rural communities to boost service delivery.

At a ceremony attended by district officials, health leaders, and community representatives, 130 bicycles, medical equipment kits, and digital reporting tools were distributed to CHEWs, marking a significant milestone in Uganda's journey toward Universal Health Coverage.

Deployed in August 2024 after a rigorous six-month training program, Kyotera's CHEWs are at the frontline of the district's public health system. They are tasked with providing preventive health education, administering family planning services, supporting immunization drives, and supervising Village Health Teams (VHTs).

To enhance their mobility and effectiveness, each CHEW received a bicycle a game changer in a district where transportation challenges have long hindered timely health service delivery.



*District Health Officials receiving some of the items from the Ministry of Health Official*

"We have received 130 bicycles that will greatly improve our ability to reach targeted households," said Dr. Edward Muwanga, Kyotera District Health Officer. "This intervention is timely and critical. For many of our CHEWs, moving between scattered communities has been a major challenge."

Alongside the bicycles, each CHEW received a comprehensive medical kit containing essential diagnostic tools: blood pressure monitors, glucometers, digital thermometers, and MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) tapes key instruments for assessing child malnutrition.

The kits also included protective gear such as gumboots, weather-resistant bags, and branded jackets, enabling the health workers to carry out their duties in all conditions, safely and effectively.

"CHEWs are now better prepared to provide household-level preventive care," Dr. Muwanga added. "This is a turning point for community health in Kyotera."

In a push toward digital transformation, the Ministry also issued tablets equipped with health data applications, enabling CHEWs to report patient data in real time. The move is expected to drastically reduce paperwork, speed up referrals, and improve coordination between community workers and health facilities.

"Digitizing our reporting systems will not only enhance efficiency but also improve accountability and evidence-

based decision-making," said Mr. Muhammad Nfitimukiza, Acting Chief Administrative Officer for Kyotera. "I encourage all CHEWs to embrace this technology responsibly."

During the event, Mr. Nfitimukiza urged the newly equipped CHEWs to carry out their work with professionalism, noting that their performance could shape their future roles in the health sector.

"This is more than a job it's an opportunity to build a career," he said. "Those who demonstrate commitment and excellence can rise through the ranks, both within district structures and at national or international levels."

The support aligns with the Ministry's broader strategy to strengthen Uganda's primary healthcare system through community involvement and preventive care.

Early feedback from communities has been overwhelmingly positive. Residents say the CHEWs have already made a visible impact by delivering health education, conducting early health screenings, and providing much needed services closer to home.

"It feels good to finally be equipped to do what we were trained for," said one CHEW, who asked not to be named. "With these tools, we can now check blood pressure, monitor sugar levels, and assess children's nutrition right in the villages."

District health authorities are optimistic that the new equipment will



help reduce preventable diseases, improve maternal and child health, and foster healthier lifestyles.

The Ministry of Health has committed to scaling up the CHEW initiative

to other districts, with Kyotera being showcased as a model of successful implementation.

## SEMBABULE HOSTS GRAND BULUNGI BWANSI CELEBRATIONS WITH STRONG CALL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

*By Namuddu Aminah,  
Communications Officer, Sembabule  
District*

**O**n June 13, 2025, the Buganda Kingdom, in partnership with the Central Government, held the annual Bulungi Bwansi celebrations at the Sembabule Playgrounds under the theme “Environmental Protection and Sustainability.” The event brought together cultural leaders, government officials, and local residents to reaffirm their shared commitment to safeguarding the environment.

The celebrations were officiated by Patrick Mugumbule, who represented the Katikiro of Buganda, Charles Peter Mayiga. Mugumbule delivered a strong message urging the people

of Mawogola to take an active role in the fight against climate change.

*“I encourage you all to embrace afforestation,” he said. “We are seeing an increasing threat of drought in the cattle corridor. Planting trees and using modern cooking methods like energy-saving stoves and electric pressure cookers will help us protect our environment.”*

He expressed concern about the growing effects of environmental degradation, “Deforestation and wetland destruction have led to erratic weather patterns and an increase in pollution-related diseases. We must act now.”

Representing the Central Government, Sembabule Resident District Commissioner (RDC) Jane Fransis Kagayi reaffirmed Uganda’s commitment to the environment as part of its Sustainable Development Goals.

“The Ministry of Water and Environment, through the Natural Resources Department at the district level, is mandated to protect our ecosystems,” she said. “Environmental laws exist to punish those who destroy wetlands or engage in illegal charcoal burning.”

Kagayi urged locals to align environmental protection with economic development, "As you protect the environment, take advantage of the Parish Development Model to engage in value addition and improve your livelihoods."

Sembabule District Chairperson, Mr. Patrick Nkalubo, commended farmers for their commitment to coffee farming and encouraged further expansion.

*"Coffee is our gold," he said. "Let's build on the success of Emwanyi Terimba and utilize the improved road infrastructure to access better markets."*

Nkalubo also made a passionate appeal to the Buganda Kingdom: "We request the Kingdom to cooperate with the Central Government by providing land for the construction of a new administrative block. This will help improve service delivery across the district."

He extended heartfelt thanks to

His Majesty the Kabaka, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, for donating a tractor to support agriculture:

*"This tractor is a game-changer. I urge our farmers to use it to increase yields and transform their incomes."*

Hon. Shatsi Musherure, Member of Parliament for Mawogola South, emphasized grassroots efforts in environmental protection and promoted her GOBERERA Program.

"GOBERERA is about creating awareness and action. We are encouraging communities to plant trees in trading centres and adopt sustainable practices," she said. "Change starts with us."

The event concluded with a strong, collective commitment from leaders and citizens to continue working together for a greener, healthier, and more prosperous Sembabule.



Deputy Katikiri Patrick Mugumbule, Mutesa and Hon Shatis Musherure at Bulungi Bwansi

# STATE MINISTER BALAAM BARUGAHARA SPARKS RENEWED HOPE AMONG MASAKA YOUTH

*By Augustine Bukululu, Communication Officer, Masaka*



Hon. Balaam Barugahara Ateenyi visiting *Bibale coffee nursery group*

The State Minister for Youth and Children's Affairs, Hon. Balaam Barugahara Ateenyi, on Sunday, June 17, 2025, launched a mobilization tour across Masaka District to reinvigorate key government empowerment initiatives. The tour aimed to raise awareness and encourage active participation in flagship programs such as the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP), Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), and the Parish Development Model (PDM) all designed to create jobs, build skills, and foster self-reliance.

The tour began with a visit to Bibale

Youth Coffee Nursery Group, a determined youth-led initiative that received Shs 9.5 million through YLP. Under the leadership of Busulwa Colonel, the group has turned this modest funding into a thriving coffee nursery that now employs dozens of young people.

*“We are deeply grateful for the government’s support,” said Busulwa. “It has equipped us with skills, built our confidence, and given us a source of livelihood.” He, however, highlighted water scarcity as a major challenge: “Without reliable water access, our operations sometimes stall especially during dry spells.”*



Hon. Ateenyi commended the group's innovation and resilience, assuring them of continued government support. "You are a model for others to follow," he said. "Our responsibility is not just to provide funds, but to journey with you and ensure your success is sustainable."

In Bulegeeya Village, the Minister visited the Bulamu-Bwebugaga-Bulegeeya Women's Group, a powerful example of women using government support to achieve economic independence. Comprising 109 members—75 of them women—the group used UWEF funds to purchase chairs and tents for hire, a business that has significantly boosted household incomes.

"This group is proof that when women are empowered, entire communities thrive," Minister Ateenyi remarked, affirming the tangible impact of UWEF at the grassroots level.

In Bugere Village, six enterprising youths showcased their budding passion fruit farm—a three-acre venture funded through the PDM. Still in its early stages, the project has already begun to yield both literal and symbolic fruits.

"We're seeing the results of our labour, literally and figuratively," said one of the group members. "This project has bonded us as a team and given us purpose."

The Minister also toured the Buyossa Coffee Factory, a SACCO operating under the Emyooga program, which has enabled local producers to expand their operations

and access broader markets.

During a performance review, Masaka's Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Niyonzima Richard, reported that the district has so far received Shs 1.085 billion under YLP and Shs 716.9 million under UWEF. However, he noted a concerning disparity in loan recovery rates: UWEF boasts a 71% recovery rate, while YLP lags behind at just 11%.

*"This tells us that women's groups are more structured and perhaps more diligent," Niyonzima noted. "Our youth need more mentorship, stronger supervision, and consistent engagement—roles our local leaders and technical teams must embrace."*

District Community Development Officer, Lilian Musisi, highlighted the GROW Program, which supports female entrepreneurs with loans ranging from Shs 4 million to Shs 200 million. "Over 10 women have already applied for grants to establish shared facilities that will grow their businesses. They are now awaiting assessment by the relevant authorities," she said.

Addressing a vibrant community rally in Kalinga Village, Minister Ateenyi made a heartfelt call for unity and civic responsibility. "Government programs alone cannot transform communities unless you, the people, take ownership," he said to the cheering crowd. "Support them, monitor them, participate in them. That is how we empower our

youth and grow our economy.”

Resident District Commissioner, Janat Billy Mulindwa, praised the Minister’s visit, calling it “ground-touching.” “Such engagements keep our technical teams on their toes. They inspire, motivate, and improve service delivery,” she said.

As the Minister’s tour concluded, one message rang clear: Uganda’s youth and women are not lacking in potential—they only need opportunities. With continued investment,

accountability, and community involvement, initiatives like YLP, UWEF, PDM, and GROW have the power to transform lives and redefine the country’s development narrative.

*“This is more than just a tour,” Minister Ateenyi emphasized. “It’s a commitment to our people. We are building a future of empowered, self-reliant citizens—and it starts here, now, in places like Masaka.”*



Minister Balaam being welcomed by CAO at the district Headquarters on June 15, 2025



# FARMING — PDM — FARMING — STORIES







# MUSEVENI APPLAUDS HAJJI ZZIWA'S FOUR-ACRE FARM SUCCESS IN MPIGI VISIT

By Kajubi Bashir, Communication Officer, Mpigi District

**M**pigi, Uganda | 18th June 2025  
President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni is currently on a strategic tour of the Greater Mpigi region to assess the implementation and impact of the Parish Development Model (PDM) and the Four-Acre Wealth Creation Strategy. The tour, which began on 16th June and runs through 28th June 2025, includes visits to successful farmer beneficiaries in the districts of Mpigi, Butambala, and Gomba.

On Monday, 16th June, the President visited several farms in Mpigi and Gomba districts. A highlight of the day was a stop at the home of Hajji Muhammad Yusuf Zziwa, a resident of Sserinyabi Village in Kammengo Sub-county, Mpigi District. President Museveni commended Hajji Zziwa for his outstanding implementation of the Four-Acre Model, which has

transformed his small plot of land into a thriving and diversified agribusiness.

"Hajji Zziwa is a shining example of what the Four-Acre Model can achieve when applied with discipline and focus," President Museveni remarked during the visit. He praised Zziwa's use of modern agricultural practices that significantly enhance household incomes, even on limited land.

The Four-Acre Model central to the NRM government's rural transformation agenda promotes strategic land utilization: one acre for coffee, one for fruit trees, one for pasture (supporting zero-grazing livestock), and one for food crops for home consumption. Farmers are also encouraged to adopt complementary enterprises such as piggery and fish farming. The President further urged Ugandan farmers to grow high-value crops like cocoa and

palm oil for maximum profitability on small plots.

In recognition of Zziwa's achievements, President Museveni pledged to donate a solar-powered water pump to help mitigate local water shortages. He also gifted Zziwa a pickup truck to ease transportation challenges, especially for poultry feed.

Zziwa's journey from a one-cow farmer to a fully diversified agribusiness owner is remarkable. His farm now produces 10 litres of milk daily, earning him an average of UGX 360,000 per month from milk sales. His poultry unit yields 55 trays of eggs daily, generating about UGX 550,000 per day or approximately UGX 60 million annually. His coffee plantation contributes UGX 56 million per year,

with additional income from bananas and avocados. Overall, Zziwa's model farm earns an estimated UGX 294 million in gross annual income. He has also ventured into herbal medicine, developing a locally approved tooth remedy recognized by the National Drug Authority.

Despite his success, Zziwa highlighted several ongoing challenges, including high transportation costs, rising feed prices, and water scarcity. Nevertheless, his farm continues to serve as a vital demonstration site, offering training and inspiration to fellow farmers in the region.

On Tuesday, 17th June, President Museveni held a key leaders' meeting at Gombe Playground in Butambala District. The meeting brought together political and technical



President Museveni tours Hajji Muhammad Yusuf Zziwa's Farm with other Leaders, a resident of Sserinyabi Village in Kammengo Sub-county, Mpigi District



leaders from Mpigi, Butambala, and Gomba to review progress and discuss strategies for scaling up rural development initiatives.

The President will conclude his regional tour today, Wednesday, 18th June, with a public rally at Kituntu Playground in Mpigi District. He is expected to reaffirm the government's rural transformation agenda and

rally continued support for the PDM and Four-Acre Model initiatives.

President Museveni reiterated his government's commitment to inclusive wealth creation and rural prosperity: "Small land doesn't mean small income. With the right strategy, even four acres can change lives in Uganda," he emphasized.

## UGANDA'S VANILLA BOOM: A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION

*By Editorial Team*

*Kampala, Uganda – June 17, 2025*

In a bold declaration at the Uganda Media Centre, Minister of State for Agriculture, Hon. Kyakulaga Fred Bwino, announced the official vanilla harvest period for Season A 2025–2026: from June 18 to September 18, 2025. Behind this announcement lies a compelling story of growth, potential, and transformation both for Ugandan farmers and the national economy.

Uganda has steadily carved its place as a key player in the global vanilla market. In 2024, the country exported a record 604 metric tonnes of vanilla, earning USD 16.6 million more than double the 266 metric tonnes exported in 2023. This achievement secures Uganda's position as the world's second-largest producer

of vanilla for the second year in a row, trailing only Madagascar.

What gives Uganda an edge is not just volume, but quality. Ugandan vanilla boasts vanillin content consistently above 4%, earning it premium status in international markets such as the United States, France, and Germany. Over the past five years, Uganda has expanded its U.S. market share from 3% to 12% and its EU share from 1% to 10%.

Vanilla is now grown in 38 districts across Uganda, including Wakiso, Mukono, Buikwe, Masaka, Kayunga, Mpigi, and Kasese. Western and Central Uganda dominate production, but the crop is also expanding in emerging districts such as Kamwenge, Kitagwenda, Kazo, Rukungiri, and





*Hon. Fred Bwino, Minister of State for Agriculture, announces the official vanilla harvest dates at Uganda Media Centre on 17th June, 2025*

Kanungu areas showing high potential for vanilla cultivation.

The favorable climatic conditions, combined with Uganda's unique two-harvest advantage, make it one of the most reliable sources of vanilla globally an attribute increasingly sought after by buyers looking to diversify away from Madagascar's volatile supply chain.

For rural farmers, vanilla represents more than just an agricultural crop it's a pathway out of poverty. Even at the current modest price of UGX 8,000/kg, vanilla farming can yield an annual profit of UGX 25 million per acre, according to ministry data. With Uganda's average household income still largely agrarian, these figures are life-changing.

The sector's rise has catalyzed local economies, particularly in areas where other cash crops struggle. Through partnerships with organizations like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and VANEX (Vanilla Exporters Association of Uganda), farmers receive training in harvesting, traceability, and processing, thereby professionalizing what was once an informal and erratic value chain.

Yet, the path is not without hurdles. Price volatility, theft, premature harvesting, and post-harvest mishandling threaten the sector's stability. To combat this, the Ministry of Agriculture has enforced strict harvest windows, implemented a digital traceability system, and strengthened regulation through district ordinances

and coordinated oversight.

Hon. Bwino emphasized that quality control remains paramount: “We are committed to protecting the integrity of Uganda’s vanilla sector through science-based harvest dates, licensed trade, and traceable processing.”

Processors such as Esco Uganda Ltd, Tuoton Uganda Ltd, and Natural Extracts Industries (NEI) have joined hands with the government to support farmers, invest in traceability platforms, and maintain Uganda’s premium brand image in global markets.

More than just an export commodity, vanilla is now central to Uganda’s broader agricultural transformation strategy. With the right investments,

Uganda could soon challenge Madagascar’s dominance and become the top supplier of traceable, high-quality vanilla globally.

*“This crop represents a golden opportunity for Uganda’s economic transformation,” said Minister Bwino. “With collaboration, sound policy, and farmer commitment, vanilla could redefine our national agricultural identity.”*

As the 2025 harvest begins, the aroma of vanilla may also carry the scent of progress, prosperity, and hope for thousands of Ugandan households and a nation poised to lead.

## LYANTONDE FARMERS ARE GROWING SMARTER WITH IRRIGATION INNOVATION

*By Wilson Kutamba, Communications Officer, Lyantonde District*



*Eng. Paddy Ainebyona, the Senior Agriculture Engineer addressing a farmer field school*



Smallholder farmers in Lyantonde are transforming agriculture through Farmer Field Schools (FFS) practical, peer-led training sessions focused on sustainable irrigation. In a region hit hard by drought and unreliable rainfall, these schools are helping farmers adopt climate-smart techniques to boost food production and resilience.

Unlike traditional classroom settings, these schools have no walls, desks, or blackboards. Instead, they unfold in the fields, with real crops and real-world problems. Recently launched in the sub-counties of Kasagama, Kaliiro, and Mpumude, the program is already being hailed as a cornerstone of Lyantonde's agricultural future.

"The future of our micro-scale irrigation program lies in these Farmer Field Schools," said Eng. Paddy Ainebyoona, Lyantonde's Senior Agriculture Engineer. "We urge communities to support them fully to ensure their success."

At the heart of the initiative is peer-to-peer learning a model where experienced farmers who have successfully adopted micro-scale irrigation share practical skills with others in their communities. These farmer-led demonstrations cover key topics like mulching, water harvesting, and the efficient use of irrigation kits, all tailored to local soil and weather conditions.

"Peer-to-peer learning yields faster and more lasting results than traditional top-down extension models," said Ezra Bwebale

Mugenyi, Secretary for Production in Lyantonde. "We're confident this approach will significantly boost agricultural productivity."

While new to Lyantonde, Farmer Field Schools have already proven their impact elsewhere. Bushenyi District, an early adopter of the model, has seen such strong results that it's now considered a national benchmark for agricultural transformation.

*"Bushenyi is a model district," noted Fred Muhangi, Chairperson of Lyantonde District. "If we embrace these schools, Lyantonde can follow in its footsteps. This is a game-changer."*

And the local government is putting its money where its mouth is. According to Ntimba Edmond, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) for Lyantonde, the district has strategically invested in micro-scale irrigation as part of its long-term climate resilience strategy.

"We started in the 2022/23 financial year with Shs. 117 million to change mindsets and establish demonstration sites," Ntimba said. "These sites, particularly in Lyantonde and Lyakajura, have since become vital learning hubs."

Funding has steadily increased. In 2023/24, Shs. 229 million was used to support 10 farmers with full irrigation systems, with farmers contributing 25% of the costs. In 2024/25, the program expanded further, allocating Shs. 306 million to support an additional 13 farmers, along with



enhanced monitoring and training. and community leaders.

In total, the district has attracted Shs. 713 million through the Micro-Scale Irrigation Program, spearheaded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) with support from the World Bank under UglIFT.

Additionally, UK-based development partner Nexus Green has established three more irrigation sites in Lyantonde and Lyakajura, further bolstering the district's capacity.

Today, 40 farmers in Lyantonde are actively practicing irrigation, growing crops like coffee, vegetables, and fruits year-round even through harsh dry spells.

"I encourage the public to visit these demo sites and see for themselves," said Mr. Muhangi. "We're seeing guaranteed food security, increased productivity, and rising household incomes."

But the benefits go beyond improved harvests. Farmer Field Schools are shifting mindsets empowering farmers to become problem-solvers, co-investors,

Despite the progress, challenges persist. Water scarcity remains a critical issue, and current funding levels can't meet the growing demand. Many farmers who are eager to join the program remain on waiting lists.

*"We call on the government to increase funding for micro-scale irrigation and invest in water harvesting infrastructure such as valley tanks and dams," urged Mr. Muhangi. "We also need taxbreaksonirrigationequipment to make it more accessible."*

As climate change continues to destabilize traditional farming cycles, Lyantonde's integrated approach rooted in community-led learning, government backing, and technical innovation offers a scalable model for other semi-arid regions across Uganda.

Farmer Field Schools are proving that the best place to learn how to farm better is on the farm itself. And for Lyantonde, this hands-on education may well be the key to a more resilient, food-secure future.



*District chairperson Mr. Fred Muhangi addressing farmer field school in Kaliiro on June 16, 2025*



*Locals with district leaders during a farmer field school in Kaliiro sub county on June 16, 2025*

# BUTAMBALA DISTRICT: PARISH DEVELOPMENT MODEL TRANSFORMS LIFE OF YOUNG FARMER

By Nalubwama Mariam, Communication Officer, Butambala District

**T**his week we bring you a story of a young man Katabira village, Butambala District, who is proving that farming isn't just for survival it's a path to prosperity.

Ishaka Nkadda aged 22 years, once a typical subsistence farmer, is now running a thriving ginger enterprise thanks to the Parish Development Model (PDM) a government initiative aimed at lifting communities out of poverty through grassroots economic empowerment.

"I first heard about PDM on the radio," Nkadda says. "They said it was to help people like me turn farming into a business. That caught my attention."

Motivated, Nkadda visited the Kibibi sub-county office where Parish Chief Zulaikah welcomed his curiosity.

*"He was eager to learn and ready to act," she recalls. "I encouraged him to mobilize others."*

He did just that. Nkadda gathered 10–15 youth, formed a SACCO, and was elected chairperson. With support from Centenary Bank Mpigi, the group received funding Nkadda himself secured a UGX 1 million loan, which he invested in ginger farming.

"I used the money for land prep, seedlings, fertilizers, and pest control," he says. "The harvest



*Nkadda a PDM beneficiary in his ginger garden*

was better than I ever imagined.”

His profits not only expanded his farm but also allowed him to complete rental houses he had left unfinished for years.

But the journey wasn’t without hurdles. Market fluctuations, poor storage facilities, pests, and erratic weather tested his resolve. To protect a calf from theft, he even housed it indoors.

“Farming isn’t easy, but if you treat it like a business, it can change your life,” Nkadda says.

He credits the PDM program and local leadership—especially Mr. Kasujja Salim, the District Commercial Officer—for ongoing mentorship.

“Mr. Kasujja’s radio talks and trainings taught us about managing farming as an enterprise,” he notes.

Kasujja praises Nkadda as an example of what youth empowerment can achieve.

*“He’s a shining example. With the right tools and mindset, young people can drive rural development,” Kasujja says.*

Today, Nkadda’s success is inspiring other youth in Butambala to view agriculture as a real economic opportunity.

*“You don’t need a lot to start,” he says. “You just need the will and now, the government is giving us the way.”*



*Nkadda, a PDM-supported farmer, combines ginger cultivation with livestock farming in Butambala*





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