



## FEATURE STORY | PG.19

# KITAGWENDA'S KYOTAMUSANA-KATOOMA 12KM ROAD UPGRADE SET TO REVIVE LOCAL TRADE

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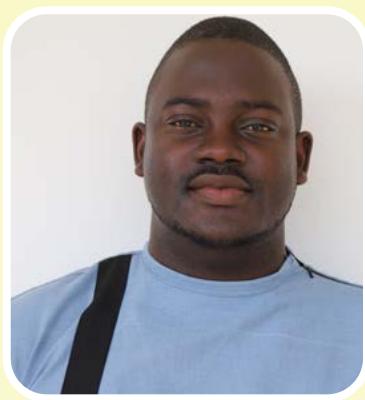
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## TUSIIME CHRISTOPHER

CHIEF EDITOR

Dear Reader.

Welcome to the 15th edition of the Rwenzori Times. True to our mission, we continue to bring you authentic stories from the heart of Western Uganda, framed by the majestic Rwenzori Mountains.

In this edition, we present timely updates, insightful analyses, and in-depth features that shape Uganda and the broader East African region. From political shifts and economic trends to social initiatives and community-driven projects, we aim to keep you informed and connected to the issues that truly matter.

We also explore the challenges and opportunities defining our region.

Whether it's sustainable development efforts, the impact of government policies, or cultural initiatives preserving our rich heritage, our coverage provides the context and clarity you need.

As Rwenzori Times, we celebrate the often-unsung triumphs of our people. Each edition brings inspiring stories of resilience, creativity, and community spirit proof that even amid challenges, the people of the Rwenzori region continue to shape a brighter future.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Dive in, explore, and stay connected to the stories that define our region.

Warm regards,  
Rwenzori Times.

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SHARON**

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# KITAGWENDA LEADERS FOCUS ON SERVICE & ACCOUNTABILITY IN FY 2025/26 BUDGET CONFERENCE

By Tumwiine David, Ag Communications Officer-Kitagwenda



*District Officers and Stakeholders pose for a photo during the engagement meeting.*

Kitagwenda District Local Government recently convened a dynamic Budget Conference as a crucial step toward drafting the Budget Framework Paper for the 2026/2027 financial year. The event united key stakeholders and leaders with a shared focus on enhancing service delivery, transparency, and accountability to the local community.

The event attracted a wide range of participants, including district political leaders, technical officers, heads of departments, development partners.

Together, they discussed the district's development priorities, resource allocation strategies, and measures to improve efficiency in public service delivery.

According to Mr Tayanga Moses Amooti, the District Planner and Statistician, the budget conference provides an opportunity to reflect on past performance and chart a clear direction for the next financial year. He explained that discussions centered on key sectors such as health, education, agriculture, water, infrastructure, and community empowerment.

District Vice Chairperson Mr Ashaba

Peter urged the assembly to prioritize infrastructure development alongside sustainable initiatives. He emphasized that such efforts are essential to advancing Uganda's Vision 2040, the National Development Plan IV, and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Akankwasa Moses, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, underscored the district's strategic focus on boosting household incomes, decentralizing service provision, and elevating the quality of life for Kitagwenda's residents.

Veteran leader and Resident District Commissioner, Mr Byarugaba Kan-

yamahane Isaiah, commended the district leadership for organizing the event. He reiterated the ruling NRM government's commitment to economically empower every citizen and propel Uganda toward an inclusive, devolved governance system.

Mr Byarugaba highlighted Uganda's abundant natural resources, stable governance, peace, and infrastructure as vital enablers in transforming the nation into a developed economy. He called on technical staff to actively promote government incentives, ensuring no one is left behind in the development journey.

## MAAIF DISTRIBUTES FERTILIZER TO 150 COFFEE FARMERS ACROSS KITAGWENDA DISTRICT

*By Tumwiine David, Ag Communications Officer-Kitagwenda*



Farmers across Kitagwenda District have received a significant boost to their coffee production efforts with the distribution of 853 bags of fertilizer from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF).

The fertilizer, each bag weighing 25 kilograms, was handed out to 150 farmers representing all 13

Lower Local Governments, including 9 sub-counties and 4 town councils, on October 31st, 2025.

At the launch event, Mr Nabasa Phillip, Assistant Resident District Commissioner for Kitagwenda, praised the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government for its timely support to coffee farmers during the current



rainy season. He urged agricultural extension workers to adopt a hands-on approach in guiding farmers on best practices for fertilizer application.

“Extension workers should not confine themselves to offices. Get into the fields, engage actively with farmers, teach good agricultural practices, and encourage proper record-keeping so farmers can track the impact of fertilizer on their yields,” Mr Nabasa cautioned.

Major Patrick Gamukama, the District Operation Wealth Creation Coordinator, also addressed farmers, stressing

the importance of strictly following fertilizer application guidelines.

**“This fertilizer is a government investment aimed at improving your coffee yields and livelihood. Do not sell it; apply it responsibly in your gardens. Extension workers are here to support you with expert advice,” Major Gamukama cautioned.**

Mr Akankwasa Moses, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Kitagwenda, advised farmers to take full advantage of the ongoing rains by properly tending to their coffee gardens and using the fertilizer to increase output and ultimately elevate their standard of living.

The event was well-attended by local leaders, including Hon. Doreen Nankunda Kaita, Secretary for Production, senior agricultural officers, and extension workers showing the collaborative effort to drive agricultural growth and economic empowerment in Kitagwenda.

This proactive support and carefully targeted resources act as relief and a better way to improve their yields and boost their incomes, advancing the district's development goals.

# SEEDS OF CHANGE: NEW FORESTRY PROJECT TRANSFORMS COMMUNITIES AND CLIMATE IN KITAGWENDA

By *Tumwiine David, Ag Communications Officer-Kitagwenda*



**K**itagwenda District has unveiled a pioneering new project aimed at revitalizing its landscapes and strengthening community livelihoods.

Launched on Friday, October 31st, 2025, the “Investing in Forests and Protected Areas for Climate-Smart Development (IFPA-CD)” project promises to transform local forestry practices and enhance ecological balance across the district.

At the heart of this initiative is the development of woodlots on private land, designed to increase the supply of

poles, timber, and other vital plantation products. This innovative approach not only nurtures the environment but also supports the economic well-being of the community by encouraging sustainable small-scale commercial forestry.

Fred Lari, the project coordinator, emphasized the focus on community engagement in refugee-hosting areas within the district.

“Our goal is to distribute tree seedlings to individuals and work closely with them to ensure these trees are planted and nurtured to maturity. Over time, this will improve household incomes

while safeguarding the ecological integrity of Kitagwenda," he explained.

Local leaders have welcomed the initiative with enthusiasm. Mr Nabasa Phillip, the Assistant Resident District Commissioner, praised the project's timing and vision.

"With rampant environmental degradation affecting our region, this project offers a promising solution. It will not only conserve our natural resources but also enhance weather conditions favourable for agriculture, especially for coffee farmers, who form the backbone of Kitagwenda's economy," Mr Nabasa remarked.

**Our goal is to distribute tree seedlings to individuals and work closely with them to ensure these trees are planted and nurtured to maturity**

Mr Akankwasa Moses, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of Kitagwenda, reaffirmed the district's commitment to supporting this initiative. "We are fully dedicated to providing all necessary support to ensure the success of this project," he stated.

As Kitagwenda embarks on this journey toward climate-smart development, the district sets a powerful example of how community-driven forestry projects can foster economic growth, environmental stewardship, and resilience in the face of climate challenges.

## NTOROKO DISTRICT RECORDS 50% AGRICULTURAL GROWTH UNDER LEGS PROJECT

*By Sahula Ibrahim, Communication Officer-Ntoroko District*

Ntoroko District has recorded significant agricultural growth following major interventions by the Local Economic Growth Services (LEGS) Project under the Ministry of Local Government. Agricultural productivity in both crop and livestock sectors has surged by 50 percent, thanks to infrastructure development and support to

local cooperatives.

With support from this game-changing project, cattle keepers under their umbrella organisation Butungama Livestock and Agricultural Marketing Cooperation Society Limited in Butungama Sub -county have reaped big. The project has constructed build-

ings, offered them with a tipper lorry and 50m soft loan at 8% per annum. "We have been able to buy 29 heads of cattle and invest 30 million in the co-operative" Mr Mutegeki Richard, the cooperative chairperson revealed.

Dr Barogeza Asiimwe Tadeo, the District Veterinary Officer noted that last year the district sold 1,196 heads of cattle in Kyabukunguru market alone. "Today even without the two

that the Government of Uganda is committed to improving lives and livelihoods at household levels, alluding to the over 1.5bn that has been injected in 47 groups in Ntoroko district under the MSC alone.

The cooperative society has been urged to do due diligence and ensure the sustainability of the interventions by ensuring that every member is fully participating and a beneficiary in such



*Butungama Livestock Market building constructed by LEGS project 2025 (photo by Sahula Ibrahim)*

remaining peak months of November and December, we have registered 974 which is 81% of last year's performance projecting our performance at about 1,500 by end of December," he said.

He made these remarks in a report presented on Monday 10th, November, 2025, to a delegation of Ministry of Local Government and representatives of the Islamic Development Bank (ISDB), the project's funding agency.

Mr Okweda Williams, Manager Micro-finance Support Centre (MSC), said

programs.

The Chief Administrative Officer, Mr Agum Moses reassured the community of the district support especially on road maintenance that will enable market accessibility to the cooperative market at Kyabukunguru as well as the Kimara valley tank. The areas, however, suffer heavy flooding during the September to December rains that usually disrupt developments in the area.

Officiating at the function that involved



*Butungama Livestock Market trough for animal watering*

field visits to different production sites implemented by the project, Mr Maichili Mayona, the Country Director and head of Mission ISDB called communities to “fully harness the potentials of these facilities and show au-

sorption of the Microfinance funding saying over 20000 dollars were still on account unutilized.

The Implementation and Support ISDB Mission tour visited the Kimara valley water tank that is at 70% com-



*CAO Agum Moses (left) explaining scope of works at Kimara Valley Tank, Mr. Maichili Mayona, the Country Director Mission ISDB (right) on Monday (Photo by sahula Ibrahim)*

thorities what they want and how they would want them done as well as suitably manage them,” Mayona advised. He, however decried low ab-

pletion. The 1.7bn valley tank has been constructed in Kimara LCI in Butungama Sub County and targets to offer farmers of Kajura, Kimara I, Kimara II, Kasungu and Kagonyibwoha villages



*Kimara water valley tank*

with solar pumped treated water for both domestic and livestock use.

The tank has a capacity of 60m litres, with an automated solar system to pump water to 40,000 litre capacity overhead water tanks and six animal troughs, an administration block, chain link for the protection of the Four meters deep valley tank. It will have an environmental access protection buffer. The project targets to serve over 40,000 heads of cattle after factoring in the aspect of siltation and evaporation of water.

Later the mission visited the Itojo Rice and Maize processing facility that is managed by Karugutu Women Sacco and have registered an increase in maize floor and rice production though with challenges of transportation for their produce as well as marketing for the group.

LEGS project has been key in the development agenda through the construction of Nombe Coffee Factory and the Kisembo-Muleju Road in Nombe sub-county connecting Ntoroko

to Kabarole district via Kijura. The project has also constructed Rwebisengo-Kiranga 7Km production road in Rwebisengo Sub- County, Nyakatooke Gravity Water Flow System worth 1.2bn shillings that is already serving over 5000 people in the district.

Ntoroko district is yet to benefit from the LEGS II phase that will see the completion of projects like the Kisembo Muleju- FP road that still has unfinished portions due to the topography of the area.

Mr Kasoro William, the district Chairperson said the era of nomadism had ended and called on the cattle farmers to embrace the new technologies ushered in by the NRM government. “The LEGs project has also been supporting farmers with artificial insemination services all geared at bolstering productivity. Ntoroko has been the third district in utilizing the MSC funds, lets embrace these services and transform our people and be a healthy and wealthy district,” he implored.

# ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK PRAISES BUNYANGABU FOR SUCCESSFUL LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH PROJECTS

By *Christopher Tusiime, Communication Officer - Bunyangabu*

The Country Operations Manager of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Mouchili Mayoua, has commended Bunyangabu District Local Government for the successful implementation of Local Economic Growth Support (LEGS) projects that are transforming livelihoods in the district.

Mr Mayoua made the remarks on Tuesday during a multi-stakeholder monitoring visit that brought together representatives from the Microfinance Support Centre, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Local Government, and other LEGS officials.

The projects, co-funded by the Government of Uganda and IsDB under the LEGS programme, include the Kagera Market in Kyamukube Town Council, the Gatyanga Coffee Processing Plant, and the Rwimi Rice Processing Plant, among others. The initiative seeks to stimulate inclusive economic growth by empowering communities par-

ticularly women and youth through agriculture and enterprise development.

Mr Mayoua noted that the visit aimed to assess the progress of the projects and that he was pleased with the results.

“I’m happy that the money is doing exactly what we intended it to do. For any challenges, I would recommend a gradual expansion of projects to avoid problems that may come with rapid growth,” he said.

The LEGS projects in Bunyangabu have had a remarkable impact on the livelihoods of farmers, many of whom shared inspiring success stories during the visit.



*Country Operations Manager, IsDB Mouchili Mayoua, during an entry meeting at Bunyangabu District headquarters.*



*A team of Bunyangabu District Local Government staff, and stakeholders like MSC, LEGS and Mr Ministry of Local Government officials and Mr Mouchili Mayoua pose for a group photo at Kagera Market.*

At the Rwimi Rice Processing Plant, Tumuhimbise Margaret, Chairperson of the Rwimi United Development Association, said the facility has enabled farmers to add value to their produce and earn more income.

“We started as 31 members before the plant was built, but now we are 163. Our rice used to be of poor quality with many stones. Now we sell clean rice at about Shs 3,500 per kilogram, which has boosted our income and enabled us to pay school fees for our children,” she explained.

At Kagera Market, banana farmers under the Kagera Banana Farmers Association said the new market in-

**The facility, with a capacity to process 2.5 tonnes of coffee per hour, is expected to significantly boost the earnings of coffee farmers once operational.**

frastructure has improved the quality and pricing of their produce.

Mr Twinomugisha Brian, the association’s chairperson, added that beyond banana sales, members also bene-

fited from funding through the Micro-finance Support Centre, which many have invested in income-generating ventures such as goat rearing.

Meanwhile, at the Gatyanga Coffee Processing Plant in Rwimi Sub-county, the project was nearing completion. The facility, with a capacity to process 2.5 tonnes of coffee per hour, is expected to significantly boost the earnings of coffee farmers once oper-

ational.

Dr David Siriri, Country Director of the Mellinenium Promise Alliance (MPA), praised the farmers for their progress and encouraged cooperatives to take advantage of government co-funding opportunities.

*"For associations that need additional inputs like tractors and lorries, the government can contribute 50 percent of the cost if you can provide the other half," he advised.*

Haji Isa Hood Nsubuga, the Chief Administrative Officer of Bunyangabu

District, applauded the commitment of technical staff and urged extension workers to continue supporting farmers to maximize gains from their enterprises.

**"Our focus is to ensure that farmers get the full benefit from these projects through continuous training and extension support," he said.**

The LEGS initiative continues to stand out as a model for public-private collaboration in promoting sustainable, community-driven development across Uganda.

## KAMWENGE DISTRICT POISED FOR HIGHER PERFORMANCE IN NATIONAL EVALUATION

*By Joy Kiiza, Senior IT Officer-Kamwenge*

**K**amwenge District is cementing its position among the top-performing districts in Uganda following a three-day assessment conducted by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in partnership with BDO, a key audit Firm in East Africa.

The exercise, which ran from November 10 to 11, 2025, aimed to enhance accountability, transparency, and per-

formance in the implementation of government and development partner programs. The pre-exit meeting provided a platform for stakeholders to review key findings, highlight achievements, and discuss recommendations for further improvement.

The session brought together district leaders, technical staff, and representatives from both OPM and BDO Firm. The assessment focused on evaluat-



ing program performance, resource utilization, and compliance with government standards — all aimed at enhancing effective and efficient service delivery to the people of Kamwenge.

In her remarks, Kamwenge District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Madam Harriet Katusiime, expressed her gratitude to the district technical staff, particularly heads of departments and sections, for their cooperation and support throughout the exercise. She commended their commitment to availing all necessary documents and information as requested by the assessment team.

***“My hope and prayer is for Kamwenge to emerge as number one in the entire country from this assessment,” she said.***

Mr Edmond Owori, Team Leader from BDO Firm working on behalf of OPM to conduct the assessment applauded Kamwenge’s technical and political leadership for their openness and teamwork. “Kamwenge District stood out for its cooperation, unlike in some districts where internal conflicts hinder collaboration,” Mr Owori noted.

He offered practical tips on how the district can maintain strong performance and better prepare for future assessments.

During the meeting, different BDO heads of departments including those from Health, Human Resource, Environment, Social Safeguards, Water, and Production presented their assessment observations and findings. They highlighted both strengths and areas needing improvement while



*Mr Edmond Owori sharing assessment tips to the participants*

commending the district for demonstrating professionalism, teamwork, political support, and effective engagement with international partners in pursuit of improved service delivery.

In his closing remarks, Hon Joseph Karungi, the District Chairperson, congratulated both OPM and BDO teams for successfully completing the exercise. He appealed to the assessors to be fair and recognize Kam-

wenge's continuous efforts toward excellence in governance and service delivery. "We hope Kamwenge will remain among the top-performing districts in the country, as it has always been," he said.

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always been**

The assessment exercise reaffirmed Kamwenge District's commitment to upholding transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement in public service management for the benefit of its citizens.

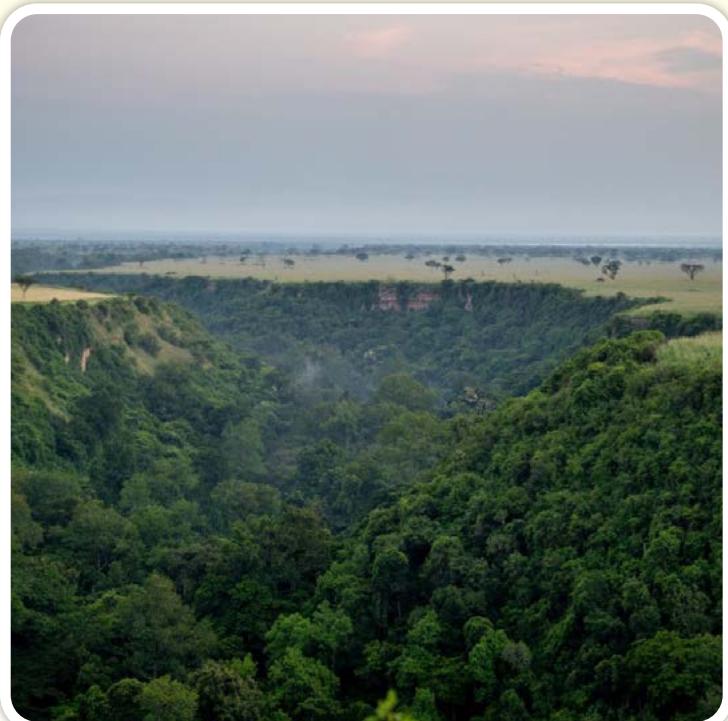
# INVASIVE PLANT SPREAD SPARKS IMMEDIATE CALLS FOR MEASURES TO SAVE BIODIVERSITY AT QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

By Kabugho Sharon, Communications Officer-Kasese

**A**n aggressive invasive plant species, Sickle Bush (*Dichrostachys cinerea*), is rapidly spreading across Queen Elizabeth National Park, threatening native vegetation, wildlife habitats, and the future of tourism in one of Uganda's most iconic protected areas.

According to Philemon Tumwebaze, the Ecological Monitoring and Research Officer at Queen Elizabeth National Park, the fast-growing shrub has become a serious ecological menace. The plant forms dense thickets and canopies that suppress native vegetation, depriving wild animals of their natural grazing and movement areas.

“The Sickle Bush has drastically altered the park’s ecosystem. It’s preventing animals from moving freely, pushing some species closer to human settlements, and increasing human-wildlife conflicts. It’s also affecting tourism, because areas that were once good for wildlife viewing are now covered by this invasive plant,” Tumwebaze ex-



*A breath-taking view of the Queen Elizabeth National Park*

plained.

Queen Elizabeth National Park, one of Uganda’s premier tourism destinations, is famous for its diverse wildlife, including elephants, lions, buffaloes, and the rare tree-climbing lions of Ishasha. However, as the Sickle Bush continues to dominate the landscape, the park’s biodiversity and visual appeal are diminishing.

“Tourism trucks are no longer produc-



*Communications Officers and QECA team during the debrief before the tour.*

tive in terms of animal sightings. Some routes that were once hotspots for wildlife photography are now overgrown and inaccessible," Tumwebaze noted.

The decline in wildlife visibility not only reduces the visitor experience but also threatens the tourism revenue that supports conservation and community livelihoods around the park.

The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and park management have tried several methods to control the invasive plant including mechanical clearing using graders but these efforts have largely failed, often accelerating the plant's spread.

After several unsuccessful attempts, the park adopted a community-based approach, involving local residents who manually uproot the bushes using hoes before burning them. While this method has shown promising results in some areas, it is labor-intensive, costly, and must be repeated regularly to prevent regrowth.

"Fighting this invasive species is very

expensive. We rely on manual labor, and the work has to be done routinely. Without sufficient funding, it's impossible to sustain these efforts," Tumwebaze said.

Tumwebaze made the remarks during a two-day familiarization tour for communications officers from communities living adjacent to Uganda's national parks, which began on November 11 and ends on November 13, 2025.

He appealed to government agencies, conservation partners, and international donors to provide financial support for the ongoing battle against *Dichrostachys cinerea*.

"We need urgent funding to protect our wildlife habitats. If we fail to contain this invasive plant, the consequences will be devastating not just for the park's ecosystem, but for Uganda's tourism industry as a whole," he emphasized.

According to Kiwanuka Sennyonjo, Paulo Godfrey who represented the Chief Warden QENP at the engagement with Communications officers, QENP is a cornerstone of Uganda's tourism, attracting thousands of visitors each year and contributing significantly to the national economy.

If the Sickle Bush invasion is not controlled, the park could lose much of its wildlife diversity and visual appeal, undermining conservation gains and community benefits.

# KITAGWENDA'S KYOTAMUSANA-KATOOMA 12KM ROAD UPGRADE SET TO REVIVE LOCAL TRADE

By Tumwiine David, Ag Communication Officer-Kitagwenda



The Kitagwenda District Local Government has launched a major rehabilitation project for a critical 12-kilometer road aimed at enhancing service delivery, improving access to market centers, and connecting communities to essential social amenities.

The Kyotamusana-Katooma Road serves as a crucial link to two key district national roads: Kabujogera Mahyoro-Kyambura and Ibanda-Kabujogera-Rwenjaza. This road directly benefits several parishes including; Iryangabi, Kengeya, Kitoma, and Nyakasura, as well as wards such as Iharagatawa, Kabale, and Kyotamusana.

At the launch ceremony, Mr Turyamureba Patrick Payi, LCIII Chairperson of Kitagwenda Town Council, welcomed the project, acknowledging the urgent need for the road upgrade. "This road had become impassable, hindering development for far too long. A collapsed bridge and poor road conditions were preventing farmers from transporting their produce, forcing them to sell matoke and coffee cheaply to middlemen," he explained.

According to Mr Turyamureba, this rehabilitation comes at the perfect time and will help increase our incomes again.

Mr Dalili RK Moses, the Chief Administrative Officer of Kitagwenda

District, thanked residents for their patience and detailed the district's work plan. The rehabilitation includes resurfacing, spot murring for 5 kilometers, opening drainage channels, installing culverts, and desilting blocked drainage systems.

He assured the community that this road is the first of several projects planned for the financial year and expects completion by November 20th to allow equipment to be moved to other sites.

Mr Dalili also urged community members to avoid inappropriate relationships with road staff to prevent gender-based and domestic violence. "Additionally, a grievance redress committee will be established to address any concerns during the project. To promote sustainability, the district will plant trees along the road, enhancing the local climate in the long term," he remarked.

The RDC of Kitagwenda, Mr Isaiah Byarugaba Kanyamahane, who officiated the launch, praised the community for their support of the NRM government and their resilience against insurgent threats.

He encouraged residents to utilize the improved road to boost household incomes, particularly urging boda boda riders to avoid speeding for their safety. "This smooth new road is a powerful tool to transport agricultural goods to markets and eradicate poverty from your homes," he said.

Mr Isaiah also urged residents to

maintain the peace established under the NRM government and participate in government upliftment programs such as PDM, Emoya SACCOs, YLP, UWEP, and SEGOP.

He called on the project management team and contractors to deliver quality work, ensuring value for money. To symbolize the government's commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection, the RDC planted a tree at the project site.

Local leaders joined in appreciation of the initiative. Kyabatimbo LC1 chairperson, Januariyo Kazora, thanked the NRM government for addressing the deteriorated road conditions, noting the numerous potholes and rocky stretches that had made travel difficult. The entire project carries a budget of UGX 219.9 million.

**Mr Ashaba Peter, Vice  
Chairperson of Kitagwenda  
District, reminded  
communities of their critical  
role in maintaining the road.  
He urged residents to regularly  
clear drainage channels, open  
trenches, and desilt culverts  
to keep the road in good  
condition for years to come.**

This road project offers a bright prospect for Kitagwenda, fueling economic growth and improving the daily lives of its residents through better connectivity and safer travel.

# BREAKING BARRIERS: AIM BENEFITS OVER 600 ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND WOMEN IN KABAROLE, FORT PORTAL

By Stephen Ainganiza, Communication Officer-Kabarole



*Mr. Binta Robert the District Planner Kabarole concerned why BRAC doesn't include Boy Child in programs to mitigate GBV*

Young women in Fort Portal Tourism City and Kabarole District are getting empowered as the BRAC AIM 2.0 program positively impacts 696 adolescent girls and women, alongside 1,500 participants benefiting from social empowerment, economic empowerment, advocacy, and educational support.

The 696 adolescent girls and young women will be direct beneficiaries of the project, while the 1,500 participants, including parents and relatives of the direct beneficiaries, will gain from the training and mentorship provided by program ambassadors.

The AIM 2.0 program is designed to empower 1.2 million adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) across Africa, with the ambitious goal of lifting them out of poverty by 2030.

This initiative adopts a comprehensive approach that includes social and economic empowerment. Participants receive mentorship in group settings, livelihood training, support for startup projects, educational assistance for girls aged 12-17 over four years, and advocacy efforts aimed at creating an enabling environment for long-term community impact.

BRAC made this announcement during a key sensitization and engagement meeting for district stakeholders in



*Mr. Fred Mwesigwa of BRAC highlighting on the components of the AIM programs and eligibility*

Kabarole District, held at Fort Breeze Hotel in Fort Portal City. The meeting focused on the implementation of the five-year “Accelerating Impact for Young Women in Africa (AIM 2.0) program.”

Fred Mwesigwa, the Technical Support Officer at BRAC Uganda, revealed that AIM 2.0 aims to enhance understanding of the program’s cost-sharing model and strengthen collaboration with local governments to ensure successful implementation. “AIM 2.0 introduces cost-sharing to foster ownership, uphold dignity, reduce dependency on grants and aid, build financial discipline, and motivate involvement in high-value startups to generate income, which can be repaid in instalments,” he stated.

Mwesigwa explained that in the livelihood support, grants are offered to young girls and individuals with disabilities under the economic em-

powerment initiative for those aged 15-17. “For cost-sharing, we target individuals aged 18-35, providing grants and cost-sharing funds that are repayable within a year at no interest. The funding packages range from \$200 to \$300 (approximately 702,568 to 1,050,852 UGX), depending on the chosen enterprise and the beneficiary’s capacity to manage it,” he noted.

BRAC Programs Manager, Kyasimiire Lewinsky noted that in Kabarole, BRAC operates in the sub-counties of Rwengaju, Busoro, Mugusu, and Mugusu Town Council, as well as Karambi in North Division, Fort Portal Tourism City.

She mentioned that in the Rwenzori region, they have six branches where clubs for adolescents, youths, and young mentors conduct community-level sessions, training peers to address issues affecting them, including livelihood support, village savings and loan associations, enterprise selection, home sanitation and hygiene, food security, and nutrition.

However, during the district engagement session, the topic of boy child engagement emerged as a significant concern. Kabarole District Planner Mr Binta Robert and Waddell Stephen questioned why BRAC is focusing solely on girls and women, suggesting that empowering girls without involving boys could lead to challenges, such as domestic violence stemming from mismanagement of projects by future partners. The duo urged BRAC



*Deputy RDC Benuza Jane asks Women to feed their husbands on nutritious traditional food and give them sex at least 21 times a week*

to include boys in their initiatives in future to mitigate the effects of gender-based violence.

Madam Benuza Jane, the Deputy Resident District Commissioner (RDC), expressed strong support for the program, commending BRAC's ongoing efforts to uplift the lives of young women in Kabarole and beyond. "We appreciate BRAC for your efforts in empowering girls and women, but I request that you involve local council leaders and GISOs to monitor the performance and progress of these programs," she stated.

Benuza also emphasized the importance of training both women and men on nutrition, as malnutrition rates in Tooro are high. She highlighted that women often

lack knowledge about preparing balanced meals for their husbands, which leads to poor health outcomes. "I urge women to feed your husbands well and serve them at least 21 times a week for marriages to be peaceful and sustainable. We've observed a rise in prostate cancer cases among men due to women denying or limiting their husbands' sexual needs," she added.

By equipping young women with the skills and resources they need to succeed, AIM 2.0 aims to create a more equitable and prosperous future for the next generation of African women. In Uganda, the program benefits 10,500 adolescent girls and women across seven regions, and globally, it encompasses 3,027 groups with 53,793 active members, generating \$790,590 in support.

#### About the AIM 2.0 Program

The Accelerating Impact for Young Women in Africa (AIM 2.0) program is a five-year initiative implemented by BRAC Uganda in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation. The program aims to equip adolescent girls and young women with the necessary tools, skills, and resources to become economically independent, resilient, and active contributors to their communities.

**AIM 2.0 aims to create a more equitable and prosperous future for the next generation of African women**

# KABAROLE INTENSIFIES CAMPAIGN TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR EARLY DETECTION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

*By Stephen Ainganiza, Communication Officer-Kabarole*

Kabarole District is stepping up efforts to help parents identify children with disabilities and ensure they access specialized care. In partnership with UNICEF and supported by Finn Church Aid, the district has been implementing a project titled “Interventions for Disabilities in Early Childhood (IDEC).”

children to specialized care facilities, such as Fort Portal Regional Hospital for shoe fitting, a project supported by Knowledge for Change, Kyaninga Child Development Center for therapy for those with motor and speech problems, and CORSU, a specialized hospital in Entebbe.

According to Mr Nyakojo, in the past, children with disabilities aged 0-3



*The Kabarole District IDEC Committee members pose in a photo in DHO's office after meeting.*

Mr Nyakojo Francis, the project focal person, stated that the initiative began in 2021, piloting in three sub-counties: Ruteete, Kabende, and Karambi Fort Portal. The project aims to screen for disabilities and connect affected

years were screened but they later discovered that addressing disabilities in children older than 3 years is challenging and costly.

“We now focus on screening children aged 0-3 years. We assess disabilities

related to movement (motor), vision, hearing difficulties, social skills, and language at Early Childhood Centers, schools, and family levels," he explained.

August and September 2025, 417 children were screened for vision, with one failing the test; 120 children were screened for motor/movement issues, with nine testing positive; and



*The Communication Officer and IDEC Focal Person Mr. Nyakojo Francis amplifying the campaign on Life FM*

**The project team, which includes selected clinical officers and community development officers, conducts home visits to sensitize families on essential care practices, such as child abuse prevention, sanitation, nutrition, and child protection. They also engage in community mobilization and dialogues at the sub-county level, as well as radio talk shows.**

Nyakojo highlighted the project's progress, indicating that between

122 children aged 18 months to 3 years were screened for social and language skills, with seven testing positive.

#### Quick Interventions

To enhance community mobilization, the IDEC team has begun outreach efforts in communities and on radio to encourage parents to identify children with disabilities and bring them for assessment during medical camps. Kabarole District, in partnership with Kyaninga Child Development Center and Doctor Arunga Eye Hospital, has organized a camp for children with hearing difficulties and eye problems from November 17th to 20th.

Frank Rwiragira, the district councilor for people with disabilities and a

member of IDEC, stated that children with hearing problems will receive free screening and treatment services at Kyaninga Child Development Center. Rwigirira noted that Doctor Arunga Eye Hospital in Rwengoma has organized a camp running from November 17th to 20th, targeting approximately 300 eye patients, including both children and adults.

*“During this camp, all children will receive free eye screening, surgery, and treatment. Adults with cataracts will receive one eye surgery free of charge, while the other will be offered at a reduced cost, with medications starting at 5,000 UGX and reading glasses at 10,000UGX. There will also be eye alignment services for those whose eyes are misaligned,” he explained.*

According to Mr Rwigirira, this initiative is part of their corporate social responsibility to give back to the community as they commemorate two years of service in the Rwenzori region. He revealed that as part of the celebration, the hospital will launch a major project to construct a 2 billion UGX eye hospital in Rwengoma, Central Division, Fort Portal Tourism City, the second of its kind after Mengo Hospital in Kampala.

Doctor Arunga’s Eye Hospital was established two years ago in response to the high demand for eye care services from patients in the Rwenzori region, who were often referred to Ruharo Eye Hospital in Mbarara. This situation became financially burdensome for many, leading to cases of blindness due to difficulties in accessing transport, medical bills, and upkeep.

Data from the facility indicates that 1 in 8 people over 40 years old have cataracts, 1 in every 3 children have allergies, and 1 in every 30 people over 40 have glaucoma.

Dr Stephen Kalyegira, the District Health Officer for Kabarole, emphasized that a child’s independence is compromised if disabilities are not identified early and referred for diagnosis.

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**Dr Kalyegira urges parents to bring their children with hearing impairments to Kyaninga Child Development Center and those with sight or vision complications to Doctor Arunga Eye Hospital for treatment from November 17th to 20th, 2025, to work towards a disability-free generation.**

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