



FEATURE STORY | PG. 16

FORT PORTAL PIONEERS ECO-HOMES INDUSTRY REGULATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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TUSIIME CHRISTOPHER

CHIEF EDITOR ////////////////////////////////////////////////////

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the 31st Edition of Rwenzori Times—an edition that underscores one central truth: effective service delivery remains the foundation of meaningful socio-economic transformation in the Rwenzori sub-region.

Across districts from Kasese to Kabarole, the question is no longer whether development efforts exist, but how well they are translating into real impact for communities. In this issue, we take a closer look at how government interventions, when combined with accountability and innovation, are beginning to yield visible results.

Our coverage highlights Kyenjojo District, where strengthened oversight and monitoring are playing a critical role in improving health service delivery. This reflects a growing recognition that investment alone is not enough—consistent supervision and accountability are essential to ensure that services reach the people they are intended to serve.

We also examine strategic investments shaping the region’s future. In Bundibugyo, the launch of education infrastructure projects worth 550 million under the CACAO Trace initiative signals a deliberate effort to strengthen human capital development. Meanwhile, Fort Portal City is charting a bold path by positioning itself as a national model

for data-driven and sustainable urban development. Its move to regulate the emerging eco-homes sector is not only timely but forward-looking—unlocking investment potential, boosting tourism, and strengthening local revenue systems.

While these developments are encouraging, they also highlight an important reality: progress must be sustained, coordinated, and inclusive. The gains being made today will only have lasting impact if they are matched with continued commitment, transparency, and community engagement.

This edition therefore goes beyond reporting progress—it invites reflection on how far we have come, and how much further we must go. The Rwenzori sub-region stands at a pivotal moment, where the right decisions and consistent action can accelerate transformation and improve livelihoods across communities.

We invite you to engage with these stories, not just as readers, but as stakeholders in the region’s development journey.

KABUGHO SHARON

Editor



AINGANIZA STEPHEN

Editor

KYENJOJO DISTRICT STEPS UP OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING TO IMPROVE HEALTH SERVICE DELIVERY



The team in a meeting with the administration of Kyenjojo General Hospital during the monitoring exercise.

Atuhaire Johnson, Communication Officer, Kyenjojo

Kyenjojo District has intensified its efforts to strengthen service delivery and accountability in the health sector through a comprehensive monitoring and supervision exercise, targeting key government health centers and hospitals across the district.

The joint exercise conducted last week by the District Health and Education Committee of the

council and the District Health Department brought together both political and technical leaders to assess the progress of ongoing health projects in the district and evaluate the quality of services delivered to communities. This also comes against a backdrop of allegations of poor service delivery in the district's health sector, which have been frequently reported in the media in recent weeks.



Members of the health committee interact with patients at Kyenjojo General Hospital.

The monitoring initiative reflects the district leadership's growing commitment to ensuring that public resources are used efficiently and that government investments translate into tangible benefits for citizens. By visiting health facilities and project sites, leaders were able to engage directly with implementers and beneficiaries, gaining firsthand insight into both achievements and persistent challenges.

Overall, the findings indicated that most projects are progressing in line with approved plans. However, the exercise also highlighted gaps that require urgent attention, particularly in infrastructure, staffing, and logistics within health

facilities.

At Nyantungo Health Centre III, progress on staff housing and sanitation facilities was visible, though slowed by limited manpower and shortages of construction materials. Concerns were also raised about poor drainage in sanitation facilities, which could pose hygiene risks.

Rwaitengya Health Centre III presented a more positive outlook, with steady service delivery and adequate drug supplies. Despite this, staffing gaps and integrated patient handling were noted as factors affecting specialized care, particularly for HIV and TB patients. Additionally, challenges in referral systems, especially the lack

of fuel and transport, continue to hinder timely emergency responses. Kisojo Health Centre III revealed deeper infrastructural and operational concerns. From leaking roofs and unreliable electricity to limited water access and overcrowded wards, the facility faces significant constraints. Health workers also pointed to the lack of critical equipment and transport,

care.

Infrastructure improvements are underway, including the near-completion of a modern general store and the installation of a digital X-ray machine. However, the absence of a fully equipped mortuary and safety concerns along the nearby highway remain pressing issues requiring intervention.



Ongoing construction of staff quarters at Kisojo HC III

making it difficult to manage severe cases and forcing frequent referrals. At Kyenjojo General Hospital, the district's main referral facility, patient numbers continue to surge. The hospital handles thousands of patients monthly across outpatient, maternity, pediatric, and general wards. While drug availability remains consistent, staffing shortages are stretching the facility's capacity to deliver optimal

oversee operations. He, however, urged them to always make more frequent spot checks to ascertain service delivery.

He also urged the leaders to address the issues that affect them, especially staffing gaps, to ease the workload and improve quality care to the patients. He noted that Kyenjojo General Hospital, being on the main road, received patients

Addressing the meeting convened at the general hospital boardroom, the Medical Superintendent, Mr Barham Kyamanywa, applauded the district leadership for the prompt visit to the hospital to



Part of the Health Committee interacts with staff at Rwaitengya HC III during the monitoring exercise

from all surrounding districts of Kyegegwa, Kagadi, Kamwenge, and even Kabarole, which numbers keep rising daily, yet staff constraints are not addressed.

The Vice Chairperson Kyenjojo District, Hon Grace Atuheire, commended the hospital for the great work they are doing, but urged them to improve on the gaps. She urged them to improve on record keeping, to back them up in negative claims that may come up in

the media, citing the recent story of a woman who had passed on after being denied quick service, allegations that have since been found untrue, as the records show the deceased had been attended to within 30 minutes after being received at the hospital.

The health committee members



also interacted with the patients in the maternity and general wards, to ascertain quality of services rendered to them, and also establish the authenticity of claims of extortion, which the patients and their attendants denied, asserting they were receiving all services at a free cost.

Surrounding communities welcomed the monitoring exercise, expressing appreciation for the district leadership’s engagement and transparency. The initiative has strengthened collaboration between leaders, implementers, and beneficiaries, fostering a shared responsibility for safeguarding public investments.

District leaders have since issued clear recommendations, including

stricter adherence to project timelines by contractors, intensified supervision by sector heads, and increased community participation in monitoring projects.

The monitoring exercise underscores the district’s recognition that effective oversight is critical to achieving sustainable development. By identifying gaps and taking corrective action, Kyenjojo is positioning itself to enhance health outcomes and overall service delivery.

As Kyenjojo district continues to prioritize regular monitoring, leaders remain optimistic that these efforts will drive meaningful improvements and contribute to the broader socio-economic transformation of the region.

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DISTRICT STAKEHOLDERS PUSH FOR URGENT EDUCATION REFORMS TO TACKLE POOR PLE PERFORMANCE

By Mbabazi Sylvia, Communication Officer, Bundibugyo

District Education Stakeholders in Bundibugyo have renewed their commitment to improving academic performance

and strengthening education standards following the District's poor performance in the recently released Primary Leaving Exams (PLE) results, in which more

than 1,000 candidates passed in Division Ungraded (U).

In a meeting held at the former Bundibugyo Primary Teachers' College, in Bundibugyo Town Council, the stakeholder urged school heads and all stakeholders to take great responsibility in monitoring teaching and learning in schools as they look forward to identifying key challenges affecting learners' performance and finding practical solutions to change the trend.

Those in attendance were the district leadership, including the District Chairperson, Secretary for social services, the Chief Administrative Officer, education department staff, Head Teachers, Parents' Teachers Associations (PTA), and School Management Committees (SMCs) members from all government-aided schools who expressed their concern over the District's performance in the national exams.

In the meeting, more emphasis was put on PTA and SMCs Chairpersons

within the district who were highly urged to be more active by supporting school management and ensuring that learners receive quality education.

Bundibugyo District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Mr Walakira Paul, reminded SMCs chairpersons that their responsibilities are beyond signing the school's capitation grants



The Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Walakira Paul addressing stakeholders.

acknowledgement documentation. He encouraged them to actively monitor how funds are used, ensure proper supervision of teachers, and promote regular attendance of pupils.

The Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Walakira Paul, reminded

SMC chairpersons that their roles go beyond signing off on capitation grant documents. He urged them to actively oversee the use of school funds, ensure proper teacher supervision, and promote regular pupil attendance. He also cautioned against prolonged tenure in leadership, noting that some long-serving members have contributed to declining school performance. He set March 30, 2026, as the deadline for schools with expired SMCs to submit lists of newly elected members for approval.

The District Chairperson, Mr Tibakunirwa Robert reminded all education stakeholders to unite and desist from being disgruntled about low school performance. He called upon all stakeholders to jointly combine efforts in the struggle to ensure that education standards and academic performance improve within the District.

He recommended regular meetings at the school level with parents, so that they can be able to properly plan for the betterment of their



The District Chairperson addressing stakeholders

schools.

The District Education Officer, Mr Byamukama John, presented a school circular for the year 2026, giving direction and guidance to all learning institutions to focus more on academic performance, involvement of all stakeholders in schools' operations, abolition of absenteeism, and drunkard teachers, among others.

Stakeholders resolved that parents should be mindful of the feeding of their children while at school, rewarding and sanctioning the best and worst performing schools respectively, stopping the transfer of teachers without replacement and the integration of enforcing the go-back-to-school bylaws to control the vice of absenteeism of school-going pupils.

RDC CRACKS DOWN ON ILLEGAL BOARDING SCHOOLS IN RWEBISENGO TOWN COUNCIL



Ass. RDC Hasheem Mwesige in one of the congested classes at New Hope Primary school on Monday. Photo by Sahula

By Sahula Ibrahim, Communications Officer, Ntoroko

The office of the President, through the Resident District Commissioner (RDC), has launched a crackdown on illegal boarding schools, aiming to enforce minimum educational standards in the district.

The initiative began on Monday, March 16th, 2026, with Deputy RDC Muzeyi Syrus and his assistant Mwesige Hasheem Uthman conducting surprise inspections of schools operating privately in

Rwebisengo Town Council.

During the visits, officials expressed concern over poor hygiene and safety standards, as well as the overcrowding in the illegal boarding sections. The inspections highlighted the risks posed to children and the urgent need for corrective measures.

“At New Hope, the hygiene situation is very poor, and their illegal boarding section is overcrowded. At Messiah Nursery and Primary School, the hygiene



one of the Hostels at Messiah Nursery and Primary school. Photo by Sahula.

standards are also alarming, as they have not separated the girls’ and boys’ toilets. At Christ Nursery and Primary School, improvised latrines are in use, posing serious health risks to the children,” Mr Hasheem noted.

The Office of the RDC has tasked the technical team to verify its findings and come up with a report before any action is taken.

inspected and be authorised before opening. This applies to both government and private schools. Schools cannot automatically convert classrooms into dormitories or start boarding without meeting all criteria.

A resident, who preferred to remain anonymous, praised the move calling for more efforts in both health facilities and PDM operations.

Under the Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines, any school that wants to run a boarding section must apply formally, be



A boy's urinal at New Hope primary School

The RDC's office has tasked a technical team to verify the findings and compile a report, which will guide subsequent enforcement actions. During the inspections, some headteachers or their deputies were reportedly absent, possibly having been tipped off by residents.

The affected schools reportedly charge between UGX 350,000 and 500,000 per pupil per term for their

boarding services.

Authorities have highlighted risks such as congested dormitories, inadequate sanitation, lack of fire safety measures, and poorly trained caretakers in illegal boarding facilities. These deficiencies can endanger learners' health and safety, especially in emergency situations where proper exits and staffing are critical.

BUNDIBUGYO LAUNCHES SHS 550M EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER CACAO TRACE INITIATIVE

By Mbabazi Sylvia, Communication Officer, Bundibugyo

Cacao Trace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the social, economic, and environmental development of cocoa farming communities in partnership with the local cocoa-growing communities of Bundibugyo District, have handed over completed school facilities at Kinyante Primary School. Through the Cacao Trace initiative, construction of a new 4-classroom block with an office

and staff room, a 4-stance VIP latrine, a fully functional water borehole, and the renovation of existing classrooms was completed.

The office of the Chief Administrative Officer, represented by Mr. Guma Kandole Nicholas, Ag Clerk to Council, launched and commissioned a completed infrastructure project at Kinyante Primary School, Kinyante Parish in Busaru sub-county.

While delivering his remarks at the



A new 4-classroom block with an office and staffroom at Kinyante Primary School

event, Mr Kandole appreciated the initiative of Cacao Trace for supporting a learning environment. He highlighted that the education within Bundibugyo has some challenges because most parents misunderstood the government policy of child empowerment.

The majority believe that to empower a boy child is to give him a piece of land on a cocoa farm, a situation that has caused more harm than good, which leads to a big number of school dropouts, early marriages, drug abuse, and involvement in various criminal activities due to money exposure at such a tender age.

Mr Kandole appreciated several learning initiatives, such as scholarships, mentorship programs, campaigns against early marriages

and teenage pregnancies that have greatly supported girls to stay in school.

He explained that parents play a crucial role in shaping the behaviors of children; they also need to ensure that boys are properly guided and supported in their education.

“As the girls’ empowerment continues, a balanced approach to address the needs of the boys is essential in bringing up responsible citizens,” Mr Kandole urged.

The Bundibugyo Senior Education Officer, Mr Bitagalire Justus, called upon all parents and the entire community to own school properties as a measure to protect them from unnecessary vandalism.



Senior Education Officer, Mr Bitagalire Justus, addressing stakeholders during the launch and handover of completed school facilities at Kinyante Primary School.

He urged the community to appreciate the initiative of Ofi- OLAM Uganda Limited for constructing modern classrooms that have attracted more pupils to the school, which has led to an increase in enrolment of learners to 425, unlike last year, when the school had four classrooms and a total enrolment of 126 pupils.

The Assistant Manager- Sustainability Cocoa, OFI- OLAM Uganda Limited Mr Wodada Wilberforce, revealed that the project, worth 550 million shillings, was aimed at improving the learning environment within the area. “Most learners were either moving to distant neighboring schools or dropping out of school

unwillingly after their primary four,” Mr Wodada said. He urged parents to effectively put those structures to their intended use by ensuring that their children go to school and desist from involving them in cocoa-related activities, which disrupts their education.



A fully functional water borehole constructed at Kinyante Primary School

FORT PORTAL PIONEERS ECO-HOMES INDUSTRY REGULATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Fort Portal Team and Data Cities officials pose in a photo after the meeting at Mountain of the Moon Hotel.

By Stephen Ainganiza –Senior Communications Officer, Fort Portal City

Fort Portal City is positioning itself as a national model for data-driven, sustainable urban development through bold steps to regulate its growing Eco-Homes sector, an initiative expected to unlock investment, boost tourism, and strengthen local revenue systems.

At a high-level Technical Planning Committee meeting held at the Mountain of the Moon Hotel, city leaders partnered with Data Cities to finalize guidelines that will bring structure and accountability to

Eco-Homes businesses. The move directly addresses longstanding gaps in property data and unregistered developments, paving the way for improved service delivery and equitable taxation.

Data Cities is a collaborative initiative in Uganda, supported by UN Global Pulse (UNGP) Uganda, Sunbird AI, and ToroDev.

This project is designed to assist emerging cities in Uganda in leveraging data and artificial intelligence for sustainable urban planning. The initiative



Eco Homes in Fort Portal City.

focuses on enhancing data management and decision-making for urban authorities, particularly in improving local revenue mobilization, public services, and infrastructure through digital innovation.

Launched in cities such as Fort Portal and Jinja, the project aims to transform these areas into modern, smart, and resilient urban centers. Key initiatives include the integration of datasets, harmonization of property naming conventions, and the creation of unique identifiers to enhance revenue collection and build taxpayer trust.

The overarching goal of the project is to improve local revenue

mobilization for better service delivery, promote equity in property tax management, and enhance the quality of life for residents. This is empowering the cities to use data for evidence-based governance.

Madam Deborah Baguma, the Senior Tourism Officer for Fort Portal City, emphasized the importance of establishing regulations for the Eco-Homes sector. “We are looking towards regulating the Eco-Homes industry, and the proposed regulations will be presented to the City Executive Committee (CEC) and subsequently to the city council for approval,” she stated.

There were huge gaps on data available on the existing buildings

that were not registered.

Mr Kusemererwa Peter, the Principal Assistant Town Clerk, revealed that once the regulations are enacted, they will provide a framework for Eco-Homes businesses to operate efficiently and meet international standards.

“This initiative aims to address the current lack of regulation, which has resulted in many businesses operating unregistered. With these guidelines, Fort Portal City can attract investors and boost tourism while ensuring sustainable development,” he noted.

The forthcoming regulations are expected to bring clarity and legitimacy to the Eco-Homes industry, allowing businesses to thrive and contribute to both local and national economic development.

Data Cities has already supported Fort Portal and Jinja in three key areas: Waste Management, Revenue Collection, and Tourism Operations, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of these essential services.

As Fort Portal City moves forward with these initiatives, it



sets a precedent for other cities in Uganda, including Kampala, Entebbe, Mbarara, Gulu, and Mbale, to follow suit in embracing sustainable urban planning and development.

UWA EMPOWERS EX-POACHERS WITH CONSERVATION ESSENTIALS FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS



Ex poachers from Nombe sub county. Photo by Sahula

By Sahula Ibrahim, Communications Officer, Ntoroko

Over 50 former poachers under their umbrella organization, the Nombe Ex-Poachers Savings Group, have received a tricycle from the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to support their transition into alternative livelihoods.

The group that vowed to end the hunting of wild game and embark on agribusiness to improve lives and livelihoods was thankful to UWA management for enabling the cordial relations that are aimed at ending illegal killing of wildlife

and enhancing conservation in the Rwenzori region.

During a function organised by UWA at Nombe Sub-County headquarters on Monday, March 16th, 2026, the group chairperson, Masereka Misaheri, said that they were not only celebrating but also mourning the loss of their comrades who had died while in the reserves

“Poverty has exposed us to dangers, especially when an animal is trapped but not dead...it fights for life and ends up killing someone...”



Deputy RDC Muzeyi Syrus hands over a tricycle to the leadership of Nombe Ex Poachers Group on Monday. Photo by Sahula

we have got many orphans and widows. We can not continue in abject poverty from generation to generation”, Misaheri stated.

UWA with support from ‘Wildplaces Conservation Foundation’ an international organisation partnering with the Government of Uganda in Conservation, donated a tricycle to support the group in changing life.

The Deputy Resident District Commissioner, Mr Muzeyi Syrus, while officiating at the function, asked the group members to fully embrace

government interventions like PDM, Grow and Emyooga that are intended to transform livelihoods. He advised them to join apiary farming around the wildlife reserve first as a means of protecting communities from stray animals as well as for commercial productivity. UWA management advised residents neighbouring the protected areas to unite and



Mr. Masereka Joshua the Snr Warden TSWR at the handover of tricycle to Nombe Ex Poachers group on Monday. Photo by Sahula



District Security team headed by the Deputy RDC Mr. Muzeyi Syrus receiving the ex-poachers Tricycle donated by UWA on Monday. Photo by Sahula

formally make requests to access some resources like firewood as another way of harnessing from the natural endowments of Uganda.

Mr Masereka Joshua, a Senior Warden in charge of Tooro Semliki Wildlife Reserve, explained that wildlife is a natural resource to all Ugandans and must be jealously safeguarded. Citizens have a role to be involved in the protection of wildlife, whether in the protected areas or in the communities.

“People should therefore not look at UWA as an enemy but rather a protector in trust of the public good,” he remarked.

UWA is yet to distribute beehives to different registered apiary farmers around the protected area after mapping their placements, which is ongoing.

Some homesteads will be given energy-saving stoves to minimise the impact of cutting trees for firewood.

Lately, several women's groups in Nombe sub-county have been engaged in the production of energy stoves with support from the Local Economic Growth support project in the Ministry of Local Government.

The Assistant RDC Mr Mwesige Hasheem, asked residents to fully embrace local tourism to boost tourism revenues that later get distributed to areas surrounding parks under the revenue sharing protocol with UWA. He urged citizens to foster a good relationship with park authorities and report any elements of poaching.

ITMS AND MINISTRY OF WORKS TAKE ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN TO SCHOOLS



Pupils of Buhinga Primary Pose in a Photo with PRO Traffic Police and ITMS

By Nyakoojo William –Fort Portal Journalist

The Intelligent Transport Monitoring System (ITMS), in collaboration with the Ministry of Works and Transport, has initiated a nationwide road safety awareness campaign targeting schools.

This initiative aims to significantly reduce the alarming rate of road

accidents in Uganda, which currently claims the lives of approximately 14 individuals daily, including two school children.

According to Steven Turyarugayo, the Communications Officer for ITMS, the organization is committed to combating motor vehicle-related crimes, forgery, and theft through real-time

tracking. The campaign focuses on promoting responsible driving, enforcing traffic regulations via digital surveillance, and optimizing traffic flow to enhance the efficiency of transport networks.

The campaign will initially target 12 schools across the country, with the goal of instilling a culture of road safety among children and students. Turyarugayo emphasized the importance of making road safety a habitual practice to achieve a notable reduction in accidents.

During the road safety awareness event at Buhinga Primary School in Fot Portal City, SP Michael Kananura, the Public Relations Officer for the Directorate of Traffic and Road Safety in Uganda, highlighted the critical need for such initiatives. “Out of the 14 daily road fatalities, two are school children. It is essential to reach out to pupils, as they are particularly vulnerable on the roads. They must understand the importance of protecting themselves,” he stated.

Kananura explained that fostering

a culture of road safety among students will empower them to become ambassadors for safe practices, thereby instilling discipline on the roads. He cautioned against the dangerous practice of overloading motorcycles with more than two pupils, which significantly increases the risk of accidents. He called for a collective prioritization of road safety



Pupils of Buhinga Primary Put on Helmets and Reflective Jackets Offered by ITMS

measures.

Ms. Asimwe Constance, the Head Teacher of Buhinga Primary School, praised ITMS for providing over 200 pupils with reflective vests and helmets. She urged parents to take an active interest in the safety of their children while commuting, particularly regarding the conduct of boda boda riders. She warned

that some riders may operate under the influence of narcotic substances, posing a serious threat to the safety of young passengers. With road accidents remaining a pressing issue in Uganda, this campaign represents a proactive step towards safeguarding the lives of children and promoting a safer

road environment for all.

Uganda experiences a significant number of road accidents annually. According to the Uganda Police Annual Crime Report for 2022, there were approximately 12,000 reported road traffic accidents, resulting in around 3,500 fatalities and over 6,000 injuries.

FROM BACKYARD BREW TO CERTIFIED BRAND: WHAT THE Q-MARK CHANGED FOR A BUNYANGABU JUICE MAKER

By Christopher Tusiime, Communication Officer, Bunyangabu

Steam rises gently from a stainless-steel pasteuriser as workers in hair caps and gumboots move carefully across the tiled floor of a juice factory in Kibiito Town Council, Bunyangabu

District. Outside, a truck loaded with raw bunches of Kisubi bananas awaits to be offloaded.

A few years ago, this scene was very different. Back then, the juice used to be squeezed by hands in a large saucepan and cooked on fire before being packed for customers, and the small operation that would later become Buka Foods Cottage

Limited was nothing other than a backyard experiment.

Today, the company produces Buka Banana Juice, a certified product carrying the Quality Mark (Q-Mark) issued by the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS). For the proprietor, Deo Mwesige, the journey from informal production to a certified brand has been one of persistence, learning and transformation.

From handmade juice to structured production

The story of Buka Banana Juice began from a humble background.



The bananas are washed with water mixed with sodium metabisulfite to disinfect them from any micro-organisms before they are stored for ripening.

Like many small producers, Mwesige initially relied on simple methods to extract juice from ripe bananas. Production was largely manual, with bananas squeezed by hand and processed using basic equipment. But now, the juice-making process begins with fresh bananas sourced from local farmers. The bananas are washed thoroughly with treated water to remove dirt and micro-organisms before being taken to a drying place and later stored in a ripening room. “When the bananas are ready, they are peeled and weighed so that we maintain consistency in every

batch,” Mwesige explains.

That is not the kind of precision that the factory always paid attention to. “Before certification, we would simply put the bananas in a big saucepan and squeeze the juice by hand,” he recalls. The company has since invested in mechanical extraction machines that improve both efficiency and consistency. Once extracted, the juice goes through pasteurisation, a controlled heating process that preserves the drink while maintaining its flavour and nutrients.

“There is a common belief that

banana juice should be cooked directly on fire,” Mwesige says. “But that can destroy important nutrients.”

Instead, the juice is placed in a pasteuriser where the container holding the juice is surrounded by boiling water.

“The heat from the water pasteurises the juice while preserving its natural taste,” he explains.

For Paul Abesiga, the production manager at Buka Foods Cottage Limited, maintaining hygiene standards has become central to their daily operations. “Food safety

begins with controlling hygiene and microorganisms,” he says. Workers entering the production area must now follow strict procedures.

“Anyone entering the production house must wear a hair cap, clean gumboots, gloves and an apron,” Abesiga explains, adding, “these are part of the good manufacturing practices we were guided to follow.”

Employees must also undergo medical examinations to confirm they are fit to handle food.

“Diseases such as tuberculosis can spread through food handling,”



Deo Mwesige poses for a photo in the plantation of bananas locally known as Kisubi from where the Buka juice is made.



Workers packaging the Buku Banana Juice for delivery to markets. The company says the demand for the juice increased after they certified it with UNBS.

Abesiga adds. “That is why workers must obtain certificates of fitness from health inspectors.”

Now, the factory also uses disinfectants such as sodium metabisulfite to control microorganisms during processing.

Certification Journey

But all this did not just happen out of the blue. The decision to pursue certification was driven by both quality concerns and the desire to access formal markets. At one point, the company experienced a recurring problem: bottles of juice would swell after spending time on the shelf.

“When juice ferments, the bottles expand,” Mwesige says. “UNBS helped us understand the causes and how to prevent it.” At the same time, he realised that entering supermarkets and other formal retail outlets would require compliance with national standards. For instance, most supermarkets require certified products and without certification, it becomes difficult to enter work with them.

Even though Mwesige initially feared that the process would be complicated, after engaging with inspectors from the UNBS, he discovered the system was

designed to guide businesses toward compliance, noting that he spent less than Shs 1.5 million on it. “They explain the requirements and give you time to improve,” he says. “No one should fear them and continue operating informally.”

But obtaining certification meant making significant changes to the factory environment. The facility had to comply with Good Manufacturing Practices, which required improvements such as a cleanable processing house, separate dressing rooms for male and female workers, a designated dining area away from the production line, handwashing facilities, cleanable toilets and a paved compound surrounding the factory.

Additionally, even the equipment must meet certain standards like all tools used in production must be food-grade and made from stainless steel.

“In simple terms, you apply, they inspect your factory and guide you on what to improve,” Mwesige says. “When everything meets the standard, they grant permission to use the Q-mark.”

One challenge, however, is that each product must be certified

separately. He notes that if a company produces many products, the certification costs increase because every product must go through the process.

Certification opens new markets

Despite the costs and adjustments, certification has significantly expanded the company’s market opportunities. Today, Buka Banana Juice is sold beyond Bunyangabu District, with distributors supplying outlets in neighbouring areas.

“I currently produce about 700 cartons every week,” Mwesige says. “But the market demand is about 1,500 cartons.” This growth has forced the company to expand its workforce. What started as a small operation now employs 20 workers.

Due to the bigger market, Mwesige is now facing a shortage of banana supply. Whereas he needs about ten lorries of bananas every week, his suppliers can only afford five, pushing him into starting to plant his own.

Zedeki Turibamwe, a distributor of Buka Banana Juice in Fort Portal City, says the improvements are visible. “Before certification, some

bottles used to swell after a few days on the shelf. That problem has disappeared. Consumers trust the product more now," he says.

He adds that retailers are more comfortable stocking products that meet national standards, explaining that when a product is certified, they know it meets the legal requirements and they can sell it with confidence.

For many customers, the appeal of Buka Juice now lies in its natural taste. Robert Tugume, a regular buyer from Kibiito Town Council, says he prefers it to carbonated drinks. "It tastes organic and does not have gases. When you drink some soft drinks you keep belching, but Buka Juice simply quenches your thirst," he notes.

Why standards matter

Consumer protection advocates say certification plays a critical role in protecting public health. Bernard Bwambale, Head of Programmes at Global Consumer Centre, explains that poorly processed juices can expose consumers to serious risks.

"We have seen cases where producers mix rotten fruits with good ones or use additives that are not food-grade," he says.

Mr Bwambale notes that such practices can expose consumers to disease and even death in extreme cases. He says certification helps prevent such practices by ensuring that production processes meet recognised minimum standards.

For example, he reasons that proper documentation also allows regulators to trace products if safety concerns arise.

"If something goes wrong, authorities can quickly trace the product back to the manufacturer and address the problem," he says.

For Mwesige, the Q-mark represents more than a symbol on a bottle. It now reflects a shift from informal production to a system built on standards, documentation and accountability.

He recalls that when they had just started, they were not focused on standard operating procedures but now every step, from receiving the bananas to packaging the juice, is controlled and documented.

And for a business that once squeezed juice by hand in a saucepan, that transformation will always be the biggest change of all.

PRESIDENT MUSEVENI WARNS KASESE LEADERS AGAINST CORRUPTION, DEMANDS ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN SERVICE DELIVERY

By Kabugho Sharon, Communications Officer, Kasese

President Yoweri Museveni has issued a strong directive to leaders and civil servants in Kasese to step up service delivery, directly engage communities, and crack down on corruption.

The message, delivered by Senior Presidential Advisor on Mobilization Lt. Col. (Rtd) Ambako Kibrai during a high-level stakeholders' meeting, emphasized that government programs will only succeed if leaders connect with the people they serve. "You are the government. You are the ones implementing the manifesto," Museveni said.

The universal message relayed during the gathering included leaders moving out of offices and into communities to explain programs, clarifying sources of funding, and actively involving citizens in monitoring service delivery.

The President expressed concern that despite multiple interventions, poverty remains high in some areas. Programs such as the Parish Development Model and emyooga were highlighted as key tools, but their impact has been undermined by poor mobilization and misuse of funds.

Leaders were urged to intensify sensitization efforts and ensure beneficiaries understand how to use these programs to improve their livelihoods.

Education emerged as a major concern, with the president warning that rising school dropout rates could create long-term social challenges.

"Children are dropping out while leaders watch," Kibrai said, noting that absentee teachers are contributing to poor performance, especially in UPE schools.

In the health sector, reports of drug theft in public facilities drew



President Kaguta Museveni

monitoring involving all stakeholders, including local authorities.

Kasese District Chairperson Bukombi Muhindi Elphaz welcomed the message acknowledging that nearly 90% of the district's UGX 115 billion budget is funded by the central government.

sharp criticism. The president called for stronger community involvement, saying citizens must be informed about drug deliveries and empowered to monitor health services.

He also emphasized preventive healthcare, particularly environmental health measures, as a more sustainable approach to reducing disease. "Corruption Will Not Be Tolerated," President Museveni said.

In one of the strongest warnings, the President reiterated a zero-tolerance stance on corruption. "Officials who divert public funds are undermining government efforts and will face consequences," he cautioned. He called for transparent and coordinated

He pointed to progress in education, health, and agriculture, including school renovations, upgraded health facilities, and irrigation projects.

However, he raised concerns over recurring floods and landslides that have displaced communities, as well as limited funding under key programs. He appealed for additional government support, including equipment to manage river flooding and increased road funding.

Resident District Commissioner Lt Joe Walunsimbi reaffirmed the district's commitment to service delivery and efficient resource allocation.

NEW APPOINTMENTS REVITALIZE KABAROLE'S STRONGHOLD ON FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY



Rev. Clovis Kyarimpa taking an oath on Thursday.

By Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Kabarole District Local Government has strengthened its District Public Accounts Committee (DPAC), reaffirming its commitment to enforcing accountability and transparency in the management of public resources.

During a council sitting held on Wednesday, December 15th, 2026, the district renewed the term

of Rev Clovis Kyarimpa who has been serving as the Committee Chairperson and appointed Rev Fr Moses Mutangirizi as a new member of the committee. The duo joins three other members; Elizabeth Kasenene, Barungi Bundinah and Solomon Bagonza whose terms are still running, completing the statutory body mandated to scrutinise accountability systems within the



Incoming DPAC members posing for a photo with district officials after taking oath.

district.

At the swearing-in ceremony held on Thursday, March 19th, 2026, the district headquarters in Kitumba, District Chairperson Dr Richard Rwabuhinga commended the appointees for accepting to serve, describing DPAC as a critical organ in ensuring proper financial management and oversight.

He emphasised that the committee plays a central role in examining audit reports, tracking public expenditure, and ensuring that government funds are utilised for their intended purposes.

Dr Rwabuhinga urged members to remain independent, objective and selfless while executing their duties,

noting that their effectiveness will directly impact service delivery and public trust in the district leadership.

He explained that Rev Fr Moses Mutangirizi's replacement was after his persona plea to be relieved of his duties following his transfer to Butundizi Parish.

Kabarole Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), Mr Stephen Rubaihayo, said the constitution of statutory committees like DPAC is a legal requirement, adding that a fully functional committee is essential for strengthening governance systems. He noted that DPAC has been instrumental

in promoting accountability, improving financial discipline and enhancing service delivery across the district.

Giving his remarks, Rev Clovis Kyarimpa thanked the district leadership for the renewed trust and pledged to work closely with fellow members to uphold accountability standards.

He commended the district for fostering teamwork and maintaining a culture of annual accountability, which he said



Rev. Fr. Moses Mutangirizi taking an oath on Thursday.

has contributed to improved transparency in public service. The strengthened committee is expected to further reinforce oversight mechanisms and ensure prudent utilisation of public resources in Kabarole District.

KAMWENGE DISTRICT LAUNCHES EXPANDED LIVELIHOOD AND EYE HEALTH PROJECT TO EMPOWER VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

By Joy Kiiza, Senior IT Officer, Kamwenge

Kamwenge District has officially launched the scale-up of the Enhancing Inclusive Economic Livelihood

and Eye Health (EIELEH) Project. Spearheaded by Albinism Umbrella, the event brought together a diverse group of



Participants pose for a group photo with district leadership & OPM

stakeholders committed to advancing inclusion, dignity, and economic empowerment for persons with albinism and other vulnerable groups.

The launch held on Tuesday, March 17th, 2026, at the District Headquarters Council Hall, attracted key participants, including the Executive Director, Country Director, and Program Managers from Albinism Umbrella, district leaders and technocrats, representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) at Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, and project beneficiaries. The gathering underscored a shared commitment to strengthening collaboration and scaling impactful

interventions.

The primary objective of the event was to introduce the expansion of the EIELEH project into Bwizi and Nkoma Subcounties. In addition, stakeholders reflected on the progress, achievements, and lessons learned from the initial implementation areas, while exploring strategies to enhance coordination for more inclusive and sustainable project delivery.

Albinism Umbrella (AU), a registered non-governmental organization, continues to play a vital role in reducing the vulnerability of persons with albinism. Through advocacy, community engagement, and capacity building, the organization promotes the protection of rights,



Iruhura twetungure savings group sharing sharing inspiring testimonies

dignity, and improved livelihoods. AU was founded to challenge harmful stereotypes, combat discrimination, and transform societal perceptions surrounding albinism in Uganda and across Africa.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Jennipher Nanyondo, Project Manager at Albinism Umbrella, expressed appreciation for the strong partnership with local government authorities. She highlighted that the project, initially planned for four years, has been extended to 2028 a clear testament to its impact and success.

Ms. Olive Namutebi, the Executive Director, emphasized the project's

growth from its initial coverage in Kabambiro, Busiriba, and Nkoma Town Council to its expansion into Bwizi and Nkoma Subcounty. She noted that the scale-up is aimed at empowering beneficiaries to become more economically active, calling for deeper engagement and sustained effort from all stakeholders.

Beneficiaries shared inspiring testimonies of transformation. Members of the Iruhura Balema Twetungure Eye Save Group reported that the project introduced them to structured saving practices by providing startup tools and saving kits. Their collective savings grew from UGX 300,000 to UGX 2,500,000.

Similarly, the Nazareth Balema Twetungure Group benefited from welding machines, salon training, and saving kits. Their financial growth was equally remarkable, with savings increasing from UGX 600,000 to UGX 3,500,000. These success stories reflect the tangible impact of combining economic empowerment with skills development.

Ms. Jack Kwesiga, the Country Director of Albinism Umbrella, thanked Kamwenge District for its continued support and strong partnership. She also commended the albinism community for their resilience and belief in their potential.

Mr. Afizi Lwambo, the Settlement Commandant at OPM Rwamwanja, praised the initiative for addressing the needs of one of the most vulnerable groups in society. He encouraged beneficiaries to maintain unity and determination, emphasizing that “disability is not inability.”

Representing the District

Chairperson, Mr. Mbonigaba Fred acknowledged the organization’s contributions in capacity building and skills training for persons with disabilities. He urged continued monitoring and support of beneficiary groups to ensure sustainability and long-term success.



Awarding of a certificate and a tailoring machine to one of the beneficiaries

The event concluded on a celebratory note, with the awarding of certificates and distribution of startup kits to youth with disabilities. This gesture symbolized not only recognition of effort but also a renewed commitment to empowering individuals to build independent and sustainable livelihoods.

The scale-up of the EIELEH project represents more than an expansion it is a reaffirmation of the power of inclusion, partnership, and community-driven development. As Albinism Umbrella and its partners

move forward, the vision remains clear: to create a society where persons with albinism live with dignity, access equal opportunities, and actively contribute to economic growth.

A LIST OF BENEFICIARIES BY SUB-COUNTY UNDER GRANT PROGRAMS IN KABAROLE

By Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Kabarole District has taken swift steps to improve the livelihoods of people living with disabilities and older persons by supporting their economic activities through a Disability Grant Programme and the Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP).

58,053,386 shillings to 12 enterprises formed by people with disabilities and 22,684,059 shillings to five enterprise for older persons across different sub-counties to help them expand their income-generating projects.

The beneficiary groups under disability grant include;

| SUB COUNTY | GROUP NAME | ENTERPRISE | GROUP CONTACT | VILLAGE | AMOUNT |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Kabende SC | Kyamwirukya Parish People with Disabilities Group | Piggery | 775093195 | Kyamwirukya | 4,900,000 |
| Harugongo SC | Kakundwa PWDs Goat Rearing Group | Goat Rearing | 776504109 | Kakundwa | 4,900,000 |
| Busoro TC | Mugusu Balema Tweyombeke Group | Piggery | 791459773 | Mugusu A | 4,900,000 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Kibasi TC | Mirongo Abalema Tushemererwe Group | Maize Gridding Machine | 779816489 | Mirongo | 4,900,000 |
| Kicwamba SC | Bwanika Abalema Tweyambe | Goat Rearing | 772227477 | Bwanika | 4,900,000 |
| Rwengaju SC | Buzinda Abalema Kweyamba Group | Goat Rearing | 787449164 | Buzinda | 4,900,000 |
| Kijura T.C | Mpora Mpora Disabled Group | Dairy | 774661921 | Mubali | 4,900,000 |
| Hakibaale SC | Kyarwagonya PWDs Group | Goat Rearing | 705776689 | Ntezi II | 4,900,000 |
| Ruteete SC | Kanyanswiga Disabled Group | Goat Rearing | 766696720 | Kanyanswiga | 4,900,000 |
| Mugusu T.C | Kibede PWDs Group | Piggery | 773342747 | Kibede | 4,953,386 |
| Mugusu SC | Kyezire Abalema Tukorrehamu Group | Sugar can Growing | 776186338 | Kyezire | 4,900,000 |
| Kasenda T.C | Mwitampungu Abalema Group | Goat Rearing | 778621873 | Mwitampungu | 4,900,000 |
| Total | | | | | 58,053,386 |

While the beneficiary groups under older SEGOP include;

| SUB COUNTY | GROUP NAME | ENTERPRISE | GROUP CONTACT | VILLAGE | AMOUNT |
|-------------|----------------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-------------|-----------|
| Kasenda T.C | Nsongya A Elders Group | Goat Rearing | 773336484 | Nsongya A | 4,536,000 |
| Kibasi T.C | Kiyaga B Older Persons Group | Outside Catering | 782325857 | Kiyaga | 4,536,000 |
| Mugusu S.C | Nyabuswa Elderly Tukwatanize Group | Carrot Growing | 790767442 | Nyabuswa | 4,536,000 |
| Kabende SC | Kanyamiyaga Elderly Goat Rearing Group | Goat Rearing | 782335847 | Kanyamiyaga | 4,536,000 |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Karangura SC | Karangura Bakaikuru Bagurusi Group | Goat Rearing | 782846416 | Kyabwire | 4,536,000 |
| TOTAL | | | | | 22,684,059 |



Kabarole district Chairman Dr Richard Rwabuhinga addressing beneficiaries recently at his office.

The District Programme Focal Person, Madam Beth Mbabazi, says out of the 12 approved for groups for people with disabilities, only two are yet to receive their funds. These include Mugusu Balema Tweyombeke Group in Busoro Sub- County and Mwitampungu Barema Group in Kasenda Town Council, which are still finalising the rectification of their bank account details before the funds

are released.

“Once the required corrections are completed, the funds will be released immediately to enable the groups start implementing their projects,” she said.

While meeting the beneficiaries at his office recently, the Kabarole District Chairperson, Dr. Richard Rwabuhinga, cautioned group

leaders against mismanaging the funds. He emphasized that the grants are meant to improve the welfare of people with disabilities through productive investment and collective economic initiatives.

Rwabuhinga urged the executive members of the groups to ensure transparency, accountability, and proper utilization of the funds. “These grants are meant to support your enterprises so that every member benefits. Leaders must ensure the money is used for the intended purpose and not diverted for personal interests,” he advised.

The Disability Grant programme forms part of the district’s broader

strategy to promote inclusive development by ensuring that vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, actively participate in economic activities.

By supporting group enterprises, the district hopes to enhance financial independence among beneficiaries, reduce poverty levels within households, and strengthen community participation in development initiatives. The beneficiaries have welcomed the initiative, noting that access to capital remains one of the biggest barriers faced by persons with disabilities when starting or expanding businesses.

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FORTPORTAL: ILLEGAL TRADERS, TAXI OPERATORS ORDERED TO OCCUPY DESIGNATED OPERATING SITES

By Stephen Ainganiza, Senior Communications Officer , Fort Portal City

Local authorities in Fort Portal City have launched a city-wide operation to evict all illegal vendors and businesses operating along public roads and streets. This initiative

which kicked off in the morning hours of Monday, March 16th, is expected to last for a month, aims to ensure that all traders vacate unauthorized areas and relocate to designated markets



Demolishing the illegal structure in Kisenyi area

and trading zones.

At the heart of the operation is Didas Muhanguzi, the Town Clerk of Central Division who explained the importance of this cleanup effort. "This exercise of combing all the illegal vendors and structures will benefit the legal traders who have raised concerns about congestion and their inability to sell goods effectively. We need to put our city in order for everyone operating in it and for visitors to enjoy," he said.

The operation targets a range of

unauthorized activities, including street vending, mobile money kiosks, and makeshift carpentry workshops.

According to Muhanguzi, prior warnings had been issued, giving



Enforcement Team Loading Items on Trucks.

vendors a two-week ultimatum to remove their structures, but many remained uncooperative. "We are now removing street vendors and



Enforcement Team Raiding Kisenyi

illegal workshops, loading their items onto trucks for storage at the city council. Those who wish to reclaim their possessions will be required to pay fines, execution and transport costs due to their noncompliance with our directives,” he explained.

Enforcement officer Mr Businge John Baptist confirmed that the operation commenced in Bazar and Rwengoma wards, with plans to extend to all wards in the Central and North divisions. “Our goal is to clean the city , restore order and sanity in this tourism hub,” he stated.

Traders have been instructed to relocate to designated areas, such as Kabundaire and Mpanga

markets. Street vendors operating along Voice of Tooro are directed to move to a designated area along Kiboga Road, while taxi operators along Kasese and Bundibugyo roads are to relocate to Nyakaseke Taxi Park.

Taxis servicing Kamwenge and Kampala roads are redirected to the Mpanga struggle area.

Accompanied by police and local enforcement teams, including members of the Kanyama Boys, authorities have urged residents conducting business in unauthorized locations to vacate before further action is taken. However, the operation has not been universally welcomed.

Many vendors, particularly women,



A Section of Stranded Vendors Witnessing Eviction After Failing to Comply

expressed concerns about the timing of the eviction, as they rely on their businesses to support their families.

Katusiime Molly, a single mother of five who sells matooke at Fuelex, voiced her distress: “This operation comes at a time when I need money for my children’s school fees and to repay loans. It will severely affect my family’s livelihood.”

The city’s crackdown on illegal vending is not an isolated incident; similar operations have been conducted in major cities across Uganda, including Kampala, Mbarara, Mbale, and Soroti. In a letter dated March 5, 2026, City Town Clerk Ambrose Ocen instructed all vendors and kiosk operators conducting business

illegally to voluntarily relocate to designated markets or approved shops.

This directive was communicated to various city officials, underscoring the urgency of compliance.

Ugandan laws, particularly the Physical Planning Act and the Local Government Act, govern the regulation of illegal structures.

These laws require compliance with approved plans and permits, and unauthorized constructions are subject to removal. Vendors must operate within designated trading zones to ensure public health and safety, making adherence to these regulations essential for fostering a safe and orderly city.

KAMWENGE PRIORITIZES EDUCATION, HEALTH IN UGX 42.4 BILLION BUDGET PLAN FOR FY 2026/2027



Mr Nkurunungyi for CAO giving key highlights to the council members

By Joy Kiiza, Senior IT Officer, Kamwenge

Kamwenge District Local Government has tabled a draft budget of UGX 42.4 billion for the Financial Year 2026/2027, signaling a continued commitment to improving service delivery and socio-economic development across the district.

The draft budget was presented during a District Council sitting held on Wednesday, March 18th, 2026. The meeting brought together key stakeholders, including District Councilors,

Heads of Departments, the District Internal Security Officer, District Police Commander (DPC), Resident District Commissioner (RDC), Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), and the District Chairperson.

The budget was formally tabled by Hon. Mbonigaba Fred, the District Secretary for Social Services, on behalf of the Vice Chairperson, who also serves as the Leader of Government Business in the District.



Honorable Mbonigaba Fred presenting the Draft Budget in council

In his presentation, Hon. Mbonigaba pointed that the proposed budget will prioritize critical sectors such as education, health, water and sanitation, roads and infrastructure development, agriculture, and community development. These sectors are considered vital for enhancing livelihoods and fostering sustainable growth within the district.

According to the budget framework, the district expects to finance the proposed expenditure largely through central government transfers amounting to UGX 40.5 billion. Additional revenue will be generated locally, projected at

UGX 1.5 billion, while donors and development partners are expected to contribute approximately UGX 423 million.

Meanwhile, the District Speaker, Honourable Gerald Twebaze, called upon councilors to thoroughly scrutinize the draft budget. He emphasized the importance of consulting constituents to ensure that the final budget reflects the most pressing needs of the people.

The draft budget will now undergo further deliberation and refinement before it is approved and implemented in the upcoming financial year.

KYENJOJO DISTRICT SENSITIZES ON PDM LOAN REPAYMENT TO SUSTAIN PARISH REVOLVING FUND



Mr. Dan Businge, representing the CAO, gives his remarks at the engagement.

Atuhaire Johnson, Communication Officer, Kyenjojo

Kyenjojo District has renewed focus on strengthening the implementation of the Parish Development Model (PDM), with leaders zeroing in on one critical issue: loan repayment under the Parish Revolving Fund.

The Parish Development Model, is a flagship government initiative aimed at transitioning households from subsistence to the money

economy, relies heavily on the effective functioning of the Parish Revolving Fund. Its success hinges on a simple but powerful principle: repayment enables rotation, and rotation expands opportunity.

Launched in February 2022, the Parish Development Model (PDM) is a Government of Uganda initiative aimed at moving about 3.5 million households from subsistence living into the money economy.



Mr. Shem Ssekyanzi, the PDM focal person addresses the Meeting,

During a high-level meeting convened on Friday, March 13th, 2026 stakeholders assessed the progress made so far, identify persistent challenges, and to chart a way forward to improve loan recovery across the entire district.

The meeting brought together Parish Chiefs, Extension Workers, Town Clerks, Sub-County Chiefs, Community Development Officers, SACCO Leaders, LC 3 Chairpersons, and other technical staff.

While opening the engagement, the Principal Assistant Secretary, Mr. Daniel Businge, who represented the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), applauded everyone for the contributions made in

making the Parish Development Program a success in Kyenjojo. He also cautioned those who had not been up to the task, and had issues in implementation, especially extortion, that they would be arrested and prosecuted in courts of law as instructed by the President.

He encouraged collective responsibility in the recovery of these funds for those that had benefited for over one year, so the funds can be revolved to other beneficiaries. He called for proper sensitization, as these funds would remain with the parish, and not returning to the government coffers. He however expressed concern over those that had



Col. Brown Mwebesa, the OWC coordinator addresses the meeting.

diverted funds from their originally intended enterprises, with some having allegedly used the funds for personal consumption, rather than for income generating projects.

Mr. Shem Ssekyanzi, the District Production Officer, and PDM focal person for Rwenzori region, informed the meeting that the program had started active implementation in June 2023, thus the first batch was eligible for paying back the received funds. “Local leaders at parish and village level must emphasize loan repayment. These funds are not grants, they are meant to revolve and uplift many more families,” he noted.

He also informed the meeting, that so far over 60 billion shillings

had been disbursed in the 167 parishes of Kyenjojo District, which should improve the standards of living in the district. He informed the session that once repayment is done, the funds would revolve around other beneficiaries in the parish, and those that had paid back would be eligible for an upgrade, if they qualify. He thus implored those present to sensitize the masses well, so they could realize the benefits in paying back, which would also make their work easier.

Col. Mwebesa Brown, the Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) coordinator, cautioned those involved in extortions to prepare to face the wrath of the law, as he already had a list



A cross section of Parish Chiefs, CDOs, Subcounty chiefs at the meeting.

compiled for those implicated, to be failing the program. He called for transparency in implementation of government programs. He also called for urgent action on beneficiaries who accessed the funds in the early phases of the program, to pay back, flexibly, so others would benefit. “Those who benefited from the Parish Revolving Fund over two years ago must take responsibility and repay so that others can also access the same opportunity,” he emphasized. The call signals a shift toward stricter enforcement and heightened accountability as the district seeks to protect the integrity and sustainability of the program.

Participants at the meeting stressed the importance of continuous sensitization, stronger monitoring systems, and coordinated follow-up mechanisms involving Parish Development Committees and local leaders. Without these, they noted, the fund risks stagnation—undermining its purpose of reaching the most vulnerable households.

There was also a shared recognition that, beyond enforcement, community awareness remains key. Many beneficiaries, leaders observed, still require consistent guidance to fully understand that the funds are recoverable loans intended to benefit entire communities over time.

KABAROLE REGISTERS 94% SANITATION COVERAGE AS LEADERS RALLY FOR IMPROVED COMMUNITY HEALTH



Dr Richard Rwabuhinga, the District Chairperson and Hon Margret Muhanga, the state minister for Health in charge of Primary Health Care at the event.

By Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Kabarole District has recorded significant progress in community health, with sanitation levels now standing at an impressive 94 percent, a milestone local leaders say reflects sustained efforts to improve hygiene and

health service delivery across the district.

The District Chairperson, Dr Richard Rwabuhinga, attributed the achievement to deliberate investments in the health sector and intensified community



A section of VHTs from Kabarole presenting a skit about sanitation during the celebrations.

linked to our broader goal of strengthening community health systems,” he said.

He urged household heads to ensure their homes meet basic health standards, including the construction of standard latrines and maintaining essential hygiene facilities within homesteads.

sensitization on sanitation and hygiene practices.

Speaking during the National Sanitation Week celebrations held on Thursday, March 19th, 2026 at Kiburara Primary School, Rwabuhinga

said the district has prioritized upgrading health facilities to improve access to quality care. “We have upgraded various Health Centre IIs to Health Centre IIIs to bring services closer to our people and enhance service delivery. This progress in sanitation is closely

The state minister for Health in charge of Primary Health Care, Margaret Muhanga Mugisa, emphasised that many common illnesses can be prevented through proper sanitation and hygiene.



Representative from Kabarole DLG Corporate Club receiving a trophy after winning the sanitation tournament.



DCAO Kabarole Mr Arthur Hakiza addressing the gathering during the celebrations.

“Diseases such as diarrhoea, dysentery, malaria and typhoid are largely preventable if communities maintain good sanitation and hygiene practices. The burden of these diseases affects not only health but also household incomes and livelihoods,” Muhanga noted. She called on communities to adopt simple but effective practices such as using standard pit latrines, regular handwashing, and clearing bushes around homes to reduce disease risks.

Muhanga, however, cautioned that despite the progress made, challenges such as open defecation

and the use of substandard latrines persist in some parts of the country. She encouraged households to maintain clean environments, including proper disposal of waste like plastic bottles. “We must use this national celebration as an opportunity to renew our commitment to sanitation and hygiene,” she said.

The Deputy Resident District Commissioner, Madam Jane Benuza, urged families to work together in maintaining clean homes, calling on women to prioritise household cleanliness and men to take responsibility for constructing proper sanitation

facilities. “Good hygiene begins at home and contributes to happy and healthy families,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Arthur Hakiza, asked residents to reflect on the national theme, “Accelerating Safely Managed Sanitation for a Healthier Uganda,” and translate it into action at the household level. He emphasised

that improved sanitation and hygiene practices are key to sustaining the district’s gains in public health.

The National Sanitation Week celebrations brought together local leaders, health officials, and community members, all united in advancing the sanitation agenda and promoting healthier living standards across Kabarole District.

VHTS EQUIPPED WITH PROTECTIVE GEAR TO BOOST COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES IN KABAROLE

By Mpamizo Evalist, Ag District Communications Officer, Kabarole

Kabarole District Health Department has distributed gumboots to Village Health Teams across several sub-counties in Kabarole in a bid to improve their safety and effectiveness in delivering community health services.

Under this initiative, two active VHT members per village are being equipped with gumboots to enable them carry out their duties more safely and effectively, particularly in hard-to-reach and

high-risk areas. The move also highlights the vital role VHTs play in promoting community health through mobilisation, disease prevention, and health education at the grassroots level.

While handing over the gear on Wednesday, March 18th, 2026, in Kabende Sub-county, Kijura Town Council, Kibasi Town Council, and Hakibale Sub-county, the Senior District Health Educator (DHE) for Kabarole, Madam Catherine Kemigabo, underscored the importance of VHTs as the



The DHE Kabarole Kemigabo Catherine handing over protective gears to VHTs from Kabende Sub-county on Wednesday.

first point of contact between communities and the health system. She noted that VHTs are instrumental in conducting door-to-door sensitisation, promoting hygiene and sanitation, and supporting early detection and prevention of diseases.

Kemigabo explained that the provision of gumboots is intended to improve the safety and morale of the VHTs as they traverse difficult terrain to reach households. She commended them for their dedication and resilience despite working on a voluntary basis, and urged them to remain committed

to their responsibilities.

The VHT Coordinator for Kijura Town Council, Mrs. Nalubega Mary Good, welcomed the initiative, praising the district health



A section of VHTs from Hakibale Sub County receiving protective gears on Wednesday.

department for its continued engagement and support. However, she appealed for additional



The DHE for Kabarole Kemigabo Catherine addressing VHTs from Kijura at their Town council offices on Wednesday.

protective gear such as gloves and reflector jackets to further ease their work.

Similarly, Mr. Rutiiija Fabiano, a VHT from Rwenjeyo Village in Ndaiga Parish, Kabende Sub-county, echoed the need for more equipment and called upon the Ministry of Health to consider providing VHTs with a monthly allowance to facilitate their operations.

Mr Rutiiija expressed gratitude for the support, noting that “these gumboots will greatly assist them in navigating villages, especially during the rainy season, as they mobilise communities on key health issues,” he explained.

VHTs remain a cornerstone of

Uganda’s primary healthcare system. They bridge the gap between health facilities and communities by promoting preventive healthcare, supporting immunisation campaigns, monitoring public health concerns, and guiding households on proper hygiene practices. Despite their critical contribution, many VHTs operate without regular pay, relying on limited facilitation.

Stakeholders continue to advocate for structured support, including monthly allowances and adequate protective gear, to sustain their motivation and enhance their effectiveness in delivering essential health services at the community level.



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