BITING POVERTY

Illiteracy concerns

Residents run away from a flying drone in Nyakagando Village, Kiryandongo District recently. According to the residents, there is a high illiteracy level in the area, which has been attributed to poverty. Many parents cannot afford to pay fees for their children, which has led to many school dropouts in the area.

PHOTO BY ERIC DOMINIC BUKENYA



Low revenue halts Masindi's dream of 2 new town councils

Stuck. Ministry of Local Government approved Kyatiri and Kabango town councils to become operational this year but the district hasn't budgeted for them.

BY ISMAIL BATEGEKA
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MASINDI. Masindi District has failed to fund its two newly established town councils which were approved by government last year.

Government through the Ministry of Local Government approved four town councils: Kyatiri and Kabango to become operational this financial year while Kijunjubwa and Bulima will roll out next financial year.

This year, the district budgeted for Shs22b but did not allocate any money to fund the newly established town councils and town boards.

The Masindi District chairperson, Mr Cosmas Byaruhanga, says the district lacks funds to support the newly approved Kyatiri and Kabango town councils.

"We do not have money to develop those town councils, our revenue collection is not enough," Mr Byaruhanga says.

Mr Byaruhanga says the lower councils are autonomous and are supposed to fund themselves in every sector but as the higher local government, they wanted to help them but were constrained by low tax base.

Mr Okumu Christopher, the Masindi chief administrative officer, says the district has always had an oversight role to ensure the smooth running of the lower councils but at times they are challenged by lack of funds.

Mr Ibrahim Nasur, the town clerk of Kyatiri, says they are mandated to share their budgets with the central government but they haven't received any funds from the government.

"We haven't received any funds from the centre. The money we collect in our town, part of it is shared by the neighbouring sub-counties," Mr Nasur says.

Mr Nasur adds that lack of support from the central government has hindered development since their budgets are always constrained.

KEY ISSUE

Mr Cosmas Byaruhanga, the Masindi District chairperson, says the district lacks funds to support the newly approved town councils.

Different view

Kimengo Sub-county chairperson Robert Musasizi says he does not support Kijunjubwa to be elevated to a town council next financial year, arguing that its level of development and tax base is still low.

However, Mr Byaruhanga says the

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briefly

Alcohol kills woman

BUNDIBUGYO: A 38-year-old woman has died due to excessive drinking of alcohol. Safuroza Mbambu, a mother of seven, allegedly died after consuming alcohol at Busunga market in Ndugutu Sub-county, Bundibugyo District, on Tuesday. The area LC I chairperson, Mr Zephas Nyamwesa, said the deceased was an alcohol addict. Mr Nyamwesa said residents found her lying unconscious on the roac and rushed her to a nearby health facili ty for treatment but she did not make [Longino Muhindo]

Institute wants trainers

KIRYANDONGO: Uganda Petrole Institute at Kigumba in Kiryandong District is searching for training pa for oil curriculum adoption. Mr Ber Ongodia, the principal, said they n to get partners for curriculum adc tion since it is still a challenge in petroleum department at the ins Mr Ongodia said there is a need institute to become a registere ber with offshore petroleum ind training organisation, saying th increase more opportunities in international partners and func [Ismael Bategeka]

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Low revenue halts Masindi's dream of new town councils

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Voices

"We do not have money to develop those town councils, our revenue collection is not enough,"

COSMAS BYARUHANGA, MASINDI DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON

"We haven't received any funds from the centre. The money we collect in our town, part of it is shared by the neighbouring sub-counties,"

IBRAHIM NASUR, TOWN CLERK KYATIRI TOWN COUNCIL

"Those who pushed for elevation of Kijunjubwa had selfish interests, we rather have a sub-county or a town board but not a town council because we have not yet reached that level in terms of development,"

JUS YAHAYA, FORMER KIMENGO COUNCILLOR

district local government will hold a consultative meeting with both political and technical leaders in Kijunjubwa to discuss whether they want to be granted a town council or not.

"I have no problem with granting what people want, towns must grow to manage garbage collection and other services, and we shall have a consultative meeting with all stakeholders in Kijunjubwa" he says.

Former Kimengo councillor Jus Yahaya believes Kijunjubwa has not yet developed to a level of a town council.

"Those who pushed for its elevation had selfish interests, we rather have a sub-county or a town board but not a town council because we have not yet reached that level in terms of development," he says.

Creating new districts

Under the Constitution, new districts and lower local governments can be created on the basis of the necessity for effective administration and the need to bring services closer to people but with time this has almost lost meaning.

Other considerations that are usually taken into account in the creation of new local governments include the means of communication, geographical features, and the density of the population, economic viability, and the wishes of the people concerned.

Reward

However, some observers say the NRM government is in the habit of creating these units both as a reward for its supporters and as a condition for support in areas where it has historically not enjoyed popular support.

The observers further explain that this politicisation of the decentralisation process has greatly undermined performance.

Shs270m

AMOUNT OF IN LOCAL REVENUE THAT MASINDI DISTRICT COLLECTED LAST FINANCIAL YEAR

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