

Kagadi, Kakumiro districts struggle to deliver services

New. The two districts were created on July 1, 2016. They were carved out of Kibaale District.

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KIBAALÉ. The newly created districts in greater Kibaale are grappling with service delivery amid poor local revenue collection, a year after their creation.

Kagadi and Kakumiro districts were created on July 1, 2016 after they were carved out of Kibaale District following a protracted debate in Parliament and relentless demands from the local populace.

The districts were operationalised in the first phase of the Financial Year 2016/2017 alongside Rubanda and Amuru, primarily to extend services nearer to the local people.

However, one year down the road, the new districts have already been overwhelmed by challenges of poor service delivery than the expected achievements on the ground.

The challenges

Some of the challenges include low revenue collections, poor health services, poor road networks, understaffing and lack of transport.

Poor local revenue collection seems the biggest challenge, which is projected to continue and is forcing districts to suffer the over dependency syndrome from the central government for financing.

The Kakumiro District secretary for finance, planning and administration, Ms Grace Tushemerirwe, while presenting the district budget for this financial year recently, stated that in the first two quarters of the year ending on June 30, the district local revenue collection was Shs80.9m, just 44 per cent of the estimated Shs185.9m.

Kakumiro District chairper-



Deplorable. A patient sleeps on the floor at Kakumiro Health Centre IV in Kakumiro District. The newly created district is grappling with service delivery amid poor local revenue collection. PHOTO BY ALEX TUMUHIMBISE

son, Mr Joseph Sentayi, said the poor local revenue is a big challenge because the district has to depend on the central government and donor funds, which come with strings attached.

"We cannot keep on depending on donor funds because of their stringent conditions and the district has come up with a revenue enhancement plan, which was approved by the district council. We want to use this plan to at least raise the revenue collection to Shs250m," Mr Sentayi said.

He said all district and sub-county leaders have been urged to sensitise the people on revenue collection in order to support the Shs11b district budget for this financial year.

Ms Generosa Nekunda, a mother and a resident of Butenja village in Mpasana Sub-county, told *Daily Monitor* that the district has been faced with poor health service delivery as evidenced through the death of four expectant mothers in labour at health centres between the months of March and June.

DISAPPOINTING

One year after beginning operation, the new districts have already been overwhelmed by challenges of poor service delivery.

She said the district has failed to create a difference in terms of better health services, especially to expectant mothers who still trek long distances to health facilities.

She said expectant mothers in her area trek more than 25km to Nkooko or Kisiita health centre III.

"Generally, the health sector performance is not yet good. There is a problem of understaffing and even when officials from State House Health Monitoring Unit visited our health centres recently following the death of expectant mothers, they found out that there are staffing gaps. We have also put in place a health committee to help address some of the challenges in the health sector," Mr

Sentayi said.

The district general purpose committee secretary, Mr Obed Tushabomwe, said Kakumiro District has no hospital to serve its population of about 300,000 people.

He recommended in this year's budget for the elevation of Kakumiro Health Centre IV to a hospital.

The former Kibaale District deputy speaker, Mr Lawrence Bazaara, who represents Kakumiro Sub-county at Kakumiro District Council, said the new district has been riddled with irregular recruitment of staff by the district service commission, lack of accountability and delayed implementation of projects.

He, however, observed that the creation of new districts has improved on works on local road network.

"Some roads have been worked on and others are in the budget. For example, the Kikooro-Kigoma-Kasenyei road was worked on at a cost of Shs.65," Mr Bazaara said.