Kalangala parish gets clean water after 37 years of pain

The residents used to fetch water from Lake Victoria, risking crocodile attacks and getting waterborne diseases.

BY DAVID SEKAYINGA

Mulabana Parish in Bujumba Sub-county, Kalangala District, has received a water system capable of providing clean and safe water 24 hours a day, ending 37 years of reliance on unsafe sources.

The project, funded by the Iceland Embassy through the Heroes for Gender Transformation Programme, is being implemented by a consortium of four non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Kalangala.

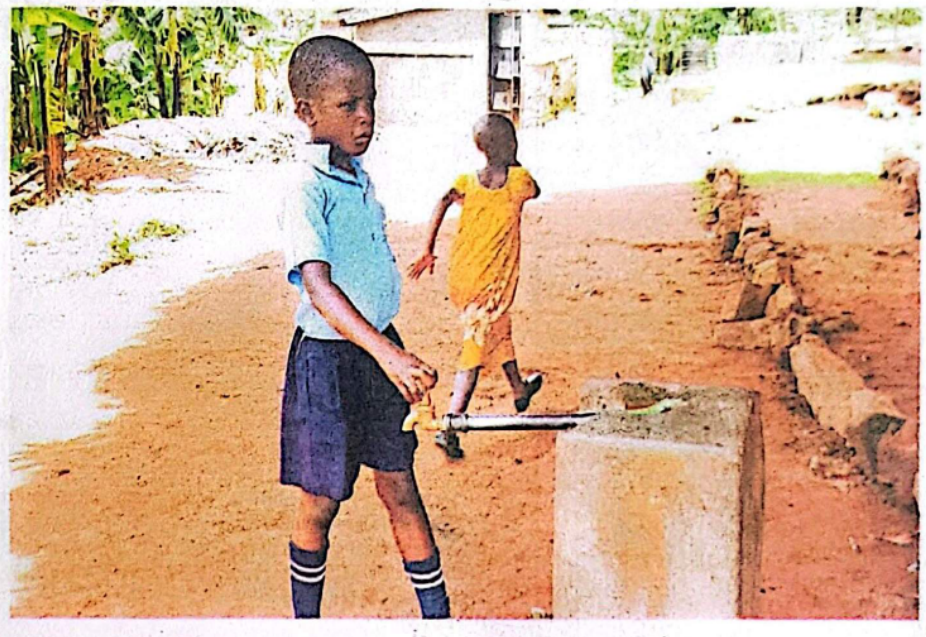
It aims to extend services to Lwabaleega, Mabigo and Mulabana villages, as well as St Victor Mulabana Primary School and Mulabana Health Centre II.

Mr Patrick Kaguluusi, the country manager of Amref Uganda and head of the Heroes for Gender Transformation Programme, said the initiative began in 2024.

"We installed a solar-powered pump capable of producing 100,000 litres of water per hour and added a 300,000-litre storage tank, enough to serve three villages, including Mulabana Primary School and Mulabana Health Centre II," he said last week.

Dr Kaguluusi explained that the decision to establish the project followed findings that water from Lake Victoria was unsafe.

"People and factories discharge waste into the lake, including human waste that is washed in during heavy rains. This exposes communities to diseases such as bilharzia and diarrhoea, which we identified during our research," he said.



A pupil opens a tap erected under the new water system at St Victor Mulabana Primary School in Kalangala District last week. PHOTO/DAVID SEKAYINGA

Mr Sveinn Gudmarsson, the head of cooperation and deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Iceland in Kampala, said provided an existing Netherlands-supported water project with additional funding to strengthen water and sanitation services.

"This also included sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) services, mainly cervical cancer screening, HPV vaccination, and skilling support for survivors of gender-based violence," he said.

Ms Prossy Nalubega, a resident of Mabigo Landing Site, said the new tap water will significantly reduce disease burden.

"Women and children were at high risk of diseases, drowning, and crocodile attacks. We are now relieved," she said.

Ms Aisha Nabunya, the chairperson of the sanitation committee at Mabigo Landing Site, said residents have agreed to contribute Shs2,000 monthly per household to maintain the system.

At St Victor Mulabana Primary School, the availability of water is already improving attendance, especially among girls.

Ms Magreat Kenshubi, the head teacher, said lack of water previously affected learners' hygiene and attendance.

The district water officer, Mr Lawrence Lweera, said the district's annual water budget of Shs195 million is insufficient to meet demand for clean water.

"With this allocation, the district can only construct one water system every three years, as each costs more than Shs300 million. We need additional funding to expand safe water access, especially in schools," he said.

AT A GLANCE

The 2025 statistics show that Kalangala District safe water coverage stands at 69 percent, with the rural safe water coverage at 44.3 percent, relying mostly on boreholes and shallow springs that provide a coverage of 23.4 percent while the protected springs provide 21 percent water coverage.

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