

RAKAI, LYANTONDE VOTERS WANT ROADS, HOSPITALS IMPROVED

Rakai and Lyantonde district profiles

Rakai

Population: 346,885

Distance from Kampala: 199km

Economic activities:

Agriculture, growing beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, coffee and cotton alongside livestock keeping plus tourism.



Lyantonde

Population: 133,017

Distance from Kampala: 204km

Economic activities:

Agriculture, growing sweet bananas, maize, and beans for food and income plus livestock farming and trade.

GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

VOTERS' NEEDS

As part of the comprehensive coverage of the election campaigns, *New Vision* will be seeking views and voices of voters on issues affecting them and expert solutions. In this edition, **Nelson Kiva, Dismus Buregyeya and Edward Anyoli** focus on Rakai and Lyantonde districts.

Rakai and Lyantonde districts have a combined population of 693,770 according to the 2024 National Population and Housing Census. Challenges notwithstanding, the leaders in the respective administrative units are striving to achieve key development parameters. With Uganda in the electioneering period, the outstanding issues that the voters and leaders in the districts want to be addressed cut across the sectors of health, education, road network and transport issues, agriculture and food security, water and sanitation, employment, poverty, energy/power, security, land management, business and economic issues, environment, domestic conflicts and leadership gaps, among others.

The Rakai LC5 chairperson, Luke Ssekamwa, called on the Government to fulfil the pledge of tarmacking Rakai-Lumbugu-Lyantonde road, saying the pledge was long overdue.

He said the road, together

with that of Rakai-Kibanda-Isingiro, that are set to be tarmacked, have been in a bad state. "The paving of these roads will boost production in both districts," Ssekamwa said.

The mainstay of both districts is agriculture which is blended with both crop growing and animal rearing. Rakai and Lyantonde are part of the cattle corridor districts.

Umar Ssebalinde, the LC5 councillor representing Byakabanda sub-county, said several villages in both Lyantonde and Rakai are yet to be connected to the national electricity grid, a thing undermining economic progress for all, which the Government is pursuing.

"Our people are unable to start small-scale enterprises such as beauty salons, welding plants and cold drinks kiosks because they do not have electricity and this automatically disadvantages many people including the youth, women and others, keeping them out of the money economy," Ssebalinde said.

According to the energy ministry, the rural electrification programme has made significant progress, with the Government aiming at increasing access to electricity in rural areas greatly. Before it was mainstreamed into the mother ministry, the Rural Electrification Agency had set a target of connecting 300,000 families annually, with a goal of reaching 60% rate of national access to electricity by 2027.

Ssebalinde also cited the lack of clean and safe water in both districts as some of the prevailing challenges. He

CITIZENS' MANIFESTO

The voters' concerns in Rakai, Lyantonde and Buganda are also reflected in the *New Vision* Citizens' Manifesto conducted between March and May this year, where prospective voters highlighted key bottlenecks undermining service delivery.

For instance, only about 12% of the respondents in Rakai endorsed the state of health services, while in the education sector, more than 88% believe something should be done to improve the sector's performance.

Only 12% of the respondents in the district approved the state of the roads and transport, as more than 88% suggested more needed to be done to achieve better roads.

To ensure a national outlook, the Citizens' Manifesto survey involved 6,006 respondents from 58 districts across the 17 sub-regions. The respondents were randomly sampled from both rural and urban set-ups.



Rakai LC5 chairperson, Luke Ssekamwa

said the challenge is common especially in deep rural areas. "In some of the communities where valley dams are the main source of water,



Resident of Rakai, Sylvia Gift Mugerwa

they encounter challenges especially during the dry seasons when the dams dry up," Ssebalinde said. Regarding education,



One of the voters in Rakai district said there have been cases of land grabbers who use forged documents to claim ownership.

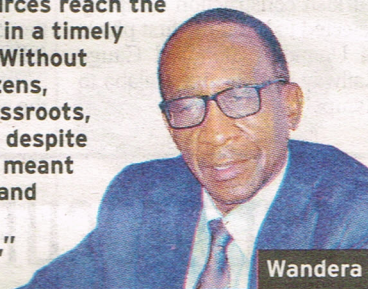
EXPERT'S VIEW

Peter Wandera, the executive director of Transparency International Uganda, said the next president should address the issues of accountability and service delivery in Lyantonde.

Wandera said in many cases, accountability among government officials and timely service delivery have been lacking, yet these shortcomings directly affect many citizens, particularly people at the grassroots level. Wandera said weak accountability undermines public trust and delays access to essential services. He called for stronger oversight and greater responsibility among public officers to ensure that government programmes reach the people they are intended to serve.

"How is the issue of service delivery going to be addressed to ensure there is sufficient accountability and transparency so that what is meant to reach the districts, especially schools and hospitals, actually gets to the communities without being captured along the way?

"We must also seriously address the challenge of improving service delivery. This means strengthening oversight, ensuring that public officers are held responsible and making sure resources reach the intended beneficiaries in a timely and effective manner. Without this, the ordinary citizens, particularly at the grassroots, will continue to suffer, despite the policies and funds meant to improve their lives and the president should tackle these problems," Wandera said.



Wandera

Anthony Magemba, the Rakai district education officer, pleaded with the Government to increase the number of government-aided primary, secondary and vocational schools.

"Rakai district has 1,397 for primary schools yet the district needs a total of 1,530 teachers," Magembe said.

LAND GRABBING

Land grabbing is the other challenge that the voters in Rakai and Lyantonde want addressed.

With many locals reporting forced evictions and fraudulent land transactions, the authorities said the problem is fuelled by unclear land ownership, missing documentation and corrupt practices involving influential individuals and organisations.

One of the voters in Rakai said there have been cases of land grabbers who use forged documents to claim ownership, while in Lyantonde, the locals have reported intimidation and violence by powerful individuals seeking to acquire their land.

Pundits said the situation is exacerbated by weaknesses in Uganda's land laws and judicial systems, making it difficult for victims to seek justice. The Government has expressed a willingness to

address the issue, but experts say more needs to be done to protect the vulnerable communities.

Rakai district was officially established in 1980. It was carved out of Masaka district. The district is bordered by Lyantonde (northwest), Lwengo (north), Kyotera (northeast), Kalangala (east), the Kagera region in Tanzania (south), Isingiro to (southwest) and Kiruhura (northwest).

Lyantonde, on the other hand, was created in 2006 following parliamentary legislation that granted the split of Rakai district. The district is bordered by Ssembabule (north and northeast), Lwengo (east), Rakai (south) and Kiruhura to the west.

President Yoweri Museveni, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) presidential candidate will campaign in Rakai and Lyantonde today.

Francis Akatwijuka, a resident of Lyantonde, said some of the roads that require attention include Kasahaga-Lyantonde and the one that links to Ssembabule district.

Sylvia Gift Mugerwa, a resident of Rakai district, said health centres need to be boosted with timely drug supply and more health staff to decongest the hospitals and referrals.