

Faith Nankinga, an 82-year-old mother of 13, sits on an old mat as she weaves a new one. Her face glitters with excitement as she speaks. Nankinga says she got married in 1961 at Kigando village in Nsambya sub-county, Kyankwanzi district.

At the time, the village was sparsely populated. She recalls that Kigando had only 12 homes, while the rest was wilderness. "There was no road. The place had only wild animals," she says.

Nankinga was married at the age of 15. Her husband later died in 2000. Before then, the entire Nsambya sub-county struggled with severe water scarcity.

She says residents had to trek about 24km to fetch water from River Mpongo or walk an additional 3km to River Kafu whenever animals polluted a nearby water source.

"We would go to River Mpongo to collect water, but it would take a very long time. If you left very early in the morning, you would return home at midday," Nankinga says, adding that sometimes they returned having drunk half of the water along the way.

When the Rev. Fr. Ronald Leonard Katsigazi of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese was transferred to Nsambya sub-county about 10 years ago, he found

the entire community severely water-stressed.

He had information that the Government through the water ministry had secured a loan from the UK Export Finance to boost agriculture and access to clean water.

In 2022, Katsigazi wrote a proposal to the ministry, expressing interest in having his village benefit from the opportunity. "I never stopped going to the district water office until our village was given a chance," he says.

Two years ago, the Government constructed a solar-powered water project worth sh695m in Kigando. Katsigazi says the project will benefit generations if it is properly managed.

The project brought joy to Nankinga and fellow residents. "No more suffering. We have access to clean water now," she says.

The water project serves a radius of 3km and has four storage tanks, each supplying about 40 cubic metres of water per day. More than 10,000 people depend on this government-funded project.

Sarah Kikomeko, the treasurer of the water project, says the clean water



Nankinga: Relieved

### BETWEEN THE LINES

◊ The Government is currently constructing more than 450 solar-powered irrigation schemes and domestic water points countrywide.

came at the right time, especially for pregnant mothers who had long struggled to access safe water.

School-going children were also

saved from walking long distances to access water.

Located near Trinity Community Primary School, the project has benefited about 1,000 pupils. Kikomeko says children now have access to clean water and no longer contract waterborne diseases.

But Alex Musisi, the headteacher of Trinity Community Primary School, is concerned about the high demand for water. He notes that hotels and lodges have started tapping water meant for residents and pupils within a 3km radius.

Musisi says many residents ride bicycles from as far as 10km away to collect tap water. He says most water sources in Kyankwanzi are dirty and unsafe for human consumption.

### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Government, through the Ministry of Water and Environment, is currently constructing more than 450 solar-powered irrigation schemes and domestic water points countrywide.

The euro 11m (sh452.6b) project is jointly funded by the Government of Uganda and the UK through the

UK Export Finance. The initiative supports Uganda's commitment to enhancing food security, empower rural farmers, and accelerate climate-resilient development.

Dr Alfred Okot Okidi, the permanent secretary at the water ministry, said Nexus Green Limited, a British renewable energy company with major operations in East Africa, is on schedule to complete installation of the water supply and irrigation sites across Uganda by this December.

On completion, he said the project will "enable modern irrigation across more than 4,500 acres, supporting agricultural production year-round and directly benefit over 10,000 farming households, translating to over 3,000 individual farmers actively irrigating high-value crops."

Okidi said the project will also provide safe water to over 2.5 million people in peri-urban and rural communities once completed.

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