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Busia Poised for Fisheries Boom as EASSI Launches Inclusive Project for Women and Youth

THE EDITORS NOTE

In this 13th edition of Bukedi Post, we highlight key developments shaping communities across the Bukedi sub-region.

From government efforts to restore order in Tororo Town to new digital agricultural initiatives improving farmers' access to inputs, this issue reflects ongoing progress in service delivery and rural transformation.

We also feature inspiring stories of community impact, including Busia students contributing to lifesaving blood donations and initiatives empowering women and youth in the fisheries sector.

As always, our commitment remains to inform, inspire and amplify voices driving development in Bukedi. Thank you for reading and supporting community-centered journalism.

Enjoy your reading



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Busia Poised for Fisheries Boom as EASSI Launches Inclusive Project for Women and Youth

By Moses Mangeni, Communication Officer Busia -DLG

Busia District is poised for significant growth in its fisheries sector after the Eastern Africa subregional support initiative for the advancement of women launched a new initiative designed to empower women and youth in the fishing value chain.

The project aims to revitalize the district's fisheries economy, create sustainable livelihoods, and position Busia as a model for inclusive development in East Africa.

Speaking during the project inception meeting held on March 4, 2026 at Chango Macho Hall in Busia, Joseline Komuhangi, Deputy Executive Director of EASSI, said the initiative seeks to address inequalities that limit women and youth from fully benefiting from the fisheries economy.

"This program aims to create about 242,000 jobs across the continent while ensuring that young women and men

participate meaningfully in the fisheries value chain," Komuhangi said.

"We want to remove the barriers that prevent women from accessing safe, dignified and profitable opportunities in the sector," she added.

The initiative, titled "Building Inclusive and Safe Fisheries Economies for Young Women Markets," forms part of a five-year regional programme running from 2024 to 2029. The project targets women and youth in the fisheries sector across several African countries, including Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Nigeria. The programme receives support from the Mastercard Foundation and TradeMark Africa.

The implementation will focus on Majanji sub-county along the shores of Lake Victoria, a key fisheries hub where many residents depend on fishing and

fish trade for their livelihoods. The project will provide training, strengthen market linkages and promote safer working conditions for women and youth involved in fish processing, handling and trade.

Lina Asiimwe, Program Manager for Gender and Economic Justice at EASSI, said the initiative will prioritize economic empowerment for young women aged between 18 and 35.

“By strengthening women’s economic independence, the project will also help reduce sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment that has been widely reported in the fisheries sector,” Asiimwe explained.

Busia district leaders welcomed the initiative, describing it as a

timely intervention that will uplift fishing communities. Kayira Muhamud, Principal Assistant Secretary representing the Chief Administrative Officer, said the programme aligns with the district’s efforts to promote inclusive economic growth.

The project will enhance incomes and restore dignity among women engaged in the fishing industry.

With targeted training, improved market access and stronger community protection measures, stakeholders believe the initiative will unlock new opportunities for women and youth while strengthening Busia’s fisheries economy and advancing inclusive development across the Lake Victoria basin.



Left: EASSI Deputy Executive Director Komuhangi Joseline and her team during the inception at the district headquarters.

Government Steps In to Restore Safety and Business Order in Tororo Town

By Okello Mathew Communications Officer Tororo-Municipal Council

Tororo Municipal Council Authority has issued a one week ultimatum to street vendors operating on road reserves and walkways to vacate the streets in a bid to create business order.

The directive was announced March 09, 2026 by the Tororo Municipal town clerk Alikwan Ayub Kisubi while addressing journalists at the Municipal headquarters.

He said the growing number of vendors selling commodities on the streets, road reserves and walkways has caused disorder in the town.

He revealed that the council has noted the spread of vendors on the street's walkways is responsible for increased accidents in the central business Centre especially in the evening hours where almost no space for pedestrians is left.

"Many vendors have taken over walkways and road reserves, making the town highly congested and unsafe for pedestrians and motorists," said Alikwan.



Municipal town clerk Alikwan Ayub Kisubi while addressing journalists at the Municipal headquarters

He noted that as a result the council has registered drastic decline in local revenue where it loses over 50 million shillings every month since most of them operate mobile business.

"Its sad to note that some of the vendors have put makeshift structures and containers blocking potential business and most of the vendors also own businesses at the new modern market," he added.

The Town Clerk urged all street vendors, including kiosk operators and mobile money agents, to voluntarily relocate to designated markets or secure shops from which to conduct their businesses.

"Anyone who will resist relocating back to the markets after the two weeks will face the law," Banya warned.

He said the council has alerted law enforcement agencies to enforce the directive and anyone who will resist will face the law.

He added that the directive also serves restrain Taxi's from loading passengers outside the Taxi Park.

Authorities identified several highly congested areas affected by illegal vending, including; the main street [Tororo-Mbale road], Nagongera road, Children's Park, Busia Road among others.

MAAIF Launches E-Voucher Training in Budaka to Boost Farmers' Access to Inputs

By Iliotu Grace Opio, Communication Officer Budaka -DLG

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has launched a two-day E-voucher training in Budaka District to strengthen farmers' access to agricultural inputs under the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project.

The hands-on training, held from March 5 to March 6, 2026 at the

District Headquarters, brought together agricultural extension staff, Community Development Officers (CDOs), and farmer group leaders who will play a pivotal role in implementing the digital system.

The government-accredited service provider M-Cash Uganda Limited which is managing the platform, explained that

the E-voucher system allows registered farmer groups to directly requisition project-supported agricultural inputs through a transparent, accountable, and efficient digital process.

The E-voucher platform will enhance transparency, monitoring, traceability, and financial control in the distribution of agricultural inputs.

Speaking to reporters, Asuman Makuma Khawanga, Acting District Production Officer and UCSATP focal person, emphasized that the training equips local leaders with the practical skills necessary to operationalize the system.

"This training was designed to give our extension staff, CDOs, and farmer leaders the hands-on knowledge needed to manage the E-voucher system effectively," Khawanga said.

The government is ensuring increased yields and timely access to inputs for our farmers by promoting digitalization and climate-smart agriculture, the government is ensuring increased yields and timely access to inputs for farmers.

Participants expressed appreciation for the practical guidance and pledged to implement the E-voucher system fully. The training aligns



Official from M-Cash Uganda Limited making emphasis about the E-voucher system to the participants during the training

with MAAIF's broader agenda of strengthening service delivery, promoting financial accountability, and modernizing agriculture across Uganda.

Budaka District, as one of the pilot areas for UCSATP, is now ready to operationalize the E-voucher system, ensuring farmers benefit from improved input access and enhanced productivity by combining government-led innovation, capacity-building, and digital technology, the initiative demonstrates a strong

commitment to empowering farmers and supporting sustainable, climate-smart agricultural practices.

"We are confident that with this system, farmers in Budaka and beyond will access inputs efficiently, boosting production and contributing to national food security," Khawanga added.

The E-voucher rollout in Budaka signals a new era of efficient, transparent, and digitally-enabled agriculture in Uganda.



Mr.Asuman Makuma Khawanga ,the Acting District Production Officer giving his remarks during the training.

Lifeline from the Classroom: Busia Students Save Lives with 553 Units of Blood

By Moses Mangeni, Communication-Officer, Busia DLG

Students from secondary schools across Busia District have donated 553 units of blood during a five-day blood donation campaign organized by the Uganda Red Cross Society Busia Branch in partnership with the Uganda Blood Transfusion Services through the Mbale Regional Blood Bank.

The drive, conducted from February 23 to 28, 2026, mobilized young people to support local health facilities and strengthen blood stocks used to save patients' lives. The campaign turned school compounds into temporary donation centers, where hundreds of students volunteered to donate blood for the first time.

According to organizers, the

initiative sought to strengthen blood reserves in the region while promoting a culture of volunteerism and humanitarian service among young people.

Bwire Brian Smith, Chairperson of the Uganda Red Cross Society Busia Branch, said the response from students demonstrated the power of youth in supporting national health efforts.

"We wanted young people to understand that donating blood is a simple but powerful way of saving lives. One unit of blood can save up to three patients, and the students of Busia have shown that compassion and responsibility start at a young age," Bwire said.

11 secondary schools participated in the campaign, including Busia Secondary School, St. Joseph Daban High School, Namaubi Secondary School, Busia Border Seed Secondary School, Bilal High School, Luma Eastern College, Bukhaliha Secondary School, Buhehe Secondary School, Buhobe Secondary School, Buwembe Secondary School and Union Vision Secondary School.

School administrators worked closely with the Red Cross and medical teams to organize the exercise without disrupting academic programs. Students lined up in large numbers to donate blood while health workers conducted sensitization

sessions to address common misconceptions about blood donation.

Health officials welcomed the campaign, noting that consistent blood donation efforts are essential in addressing shortages in health facilities. Dr. Fred Duku, Medical Superintendent at Masafu General Hospital, said community mobilization has already helped improve blood availability.

“Regular blood donation campaigns like this strengthen our ability to respond to emergencies, maternal health needs and critical surgeries. The contribution

from Busia students will help save many lives,” Dr. Duku said.

The campaign reflects strong collaboration between schools, health institutions and humanitarian organizations. They plan to expand sensitization programs, strengthen school partnerships and encourage more young people to participate in future blood drives.

Busia’s students have delivered a powerful message about how young people can play a vital role in saving lives and strengthening community health systems with the 553 units collected.



Uganda Redcross Society Busia Branch Youth team with the Branch Manager, Mangeni Andrew (brown jumper) and some members from the National Head Office at the Branch office ahead of the blood donation drive

Busia CAO Champions Women's Empowerment on International Women's Day

By Mangeni Moses Communication Officer Busia -DLG

Busia District's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) has highlighted the critical role of women in driving community development as the world celebrated International Women's Day.

In a statement released on March 8, 2026, Lubuuka David reaffirmed the district's commitment to empowering women and girls through targeted government

programmes and strategic partnerships.

"Women are at the heart of resilient families, thriving communities, and a growing economy. Our district remains committed to creating opportunities that enable women to lead, contribute and inspire," Lubuuka said.

The CAO emphasized that initiatives such as the Parish



Women leaders at Kololo during the women's day celebrations.

Development Model, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), and the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises have strengthened women's participation in leadership, economic activities, and decision-making structures across all lower local governments.

Highlighting local successes, the CAO pointed to thriving women groups and cooperatives, including the Busia Women Cross Border Traders Cooperative and the Busia Women Chairpersons Cooperative, which have enhanced livelihoods, leadership skills, and economic independence.

"By providing an enabling environment and supporting women-led initiatives, we are not only promoting equality but also building a model of inclusive development that young girls and future leaders can aspire to,"

Lubuuka added.

The CAO urged all stakeholders, development partners, and community members to continue supporting women-focused programmes, stressing that collective action is essential to sustain progress. He further urged everyone to unite to ensure that every woman and girl in Busia has the opportunity to thrive and fully contribute to shared growth.



Lubuuka David, Chief Administrative Officer - Busia

District Staff Trained as Government Digitalizes Agricultural Support Services

By Akello Priscilla Communication Officer Pallisa- DLG

District technical staff in Pallisa District have undergone training on a new electronic voucher (e-voucher) system as the Government of Uganda moves to digitalize agricultural support services and improve transparency in the delivery of farm inputs to farmers.

The hands-on training held on March 9, 2026 at the district headquarters brought together district production staff, agricultural extension officers, community development officers from both district and lower local government levels, the District Commercial Officer, and staff from the Natural Resources, Environment and ICT departments.

The initiative forms part of the Uganda Climate-Smart Agricultural Transformation Project (UCSATP) being implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) to modernize agricultural service delivery and strengthen farmers' access to quality inputs.

Present at the training were Ms. Adrine Agaba from MAAIF and Mr. Ochuli Simon Peter, alongside technical experts from m-Cash Uganda Limited, the accredited service provider contracted by MAAIF to deploy and manage the digital platform in participating districts.

The e-voucher management system is a digital platform designed to enable farmer groups and registered beneficiaries to directly access project-supported inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural requirements through accredited agro-input dealers.

The system will improve efficiency, reduce delays, and minimize misuse of agricultural inputs while ensuring that government support reaches the intended beneficiaries in a transparent and accountable manner.

During the training, Mr. Otalokol Leonard from m-Cash Uganda Limited guided participants through the practical operation of the system, demonstrating

how the platform works and how technical staff will support farmers in accessing services through the digital platform.

Participants interacted with the system during the hands-on session, asked questions and gained practical experience that will enable them to guide farmers during the rollout of the program in their respective sub-counties.

Speaking during the training, Pallisa District Production Officer, Dr. Okwalinga Michael, said the digital platform is part of government efforts to strengthen service delivery and empower farmers with timely access to agricultural inputs.

“The e-voucher system will empower farmers, improve efficiency and enhance

transparency in the distribution of agricultural inputs. As technical officers working directly with farmers, you must fully understand the system so that you guide and support them effectively,” Dr. Okwalinga said.

He also urged extension staff to mobilize farmers into groups and ensure they understand how the new system will help them access government-supported agricultural inputs.

Representing the District Chairperson, the District Vice Chairperson Hon. Opakasi Clement commended the Government of Uganda and MAAIF for selecting Pallisa District to benefit from the project.

“We appreciate the Government for extending this important



Participants closely listening in during the training

program to Pallisa. Our farmers have always embraced government initiatives aimed at improving productivity, and this digital system will further strengthen transparency and service delivery in the agricultural sector,” Hon. Opakasi said.

He encouraged participants to share the knowledge acquired during the training widely so that farmers across the district receive accurate information about the new system.

Officials say the rollout of the e-voucher platform will strengthen monitoring, accountability and efficiency in the distribution of agricultural inputs while contributing to improved agricultural productivity and climate-smart farming practices.

The training marks a significant step in preparing district technical staff to effectively implement the system and support farmers in accessing quality agricultural inputs under the government’s broader agenda of transforming agriculture and improving livelihoods.



Otalakol Leonard from m-Cash limited addressing the trainees



Adrine Agaba from MAAIF

Government Encourages Farmer Cooperatives to Strengthen Dairy Value Chain

The Government of Uganda has intensified efforts to strengthen the dairy sector in Butaleja District by encouraging

farmers to organize themselves into cooperatives and participate in a new support program aimed at improving milk production and market access.

The initiative, implemented under the Uganda Climate Smart Agriculture Transformation Project (UCSATP), will support farmers interested in dairy farming through a co-funding arrangement designed to promote sustainable livestock development and improve household incomes.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) announced the program on March 9, 2026 during a meeting



with farmer group leaders and Community Development Officers at the Butaleja District Health Boardroom.

Speaking during the meeting, MAAIF official James Higenyi urged farmers to form organized groups in order to benefit from the program, noting that collective action will strengthen the dairy value chain and enable farmers to access government support more effectively.

"We are encouraging farmers to work together in organized groups because cooperatives make it easier for government and partners to deliver services and support. When farmers collaborate, they can improve production, access markets and strengthen the dairy industry," Higenyi said.

Under the program guidelines, farmers must organize themselves into groups of at least 15 members, with each member owning a minimum of two cattle and demonstrating prior experience in livestock farming.

District Agriculture Engineer Charles Swama explained that the project is supported by the World Bank and is currently being implemented in only 69 districts across the country.

"This project targets key agricultural value chains including

livestock farming, fisheries, crop production and insect farming. It is part of the government's broader strategy to transform agriculture and improve farmers' incomes," Swama said.

In Butaleja District, five sub-counties have been selected to benefit from the dairy farming component of the program. These include Nawanjofu Sub-county, Nabiganda Sub-county, Naweyo Sub-county, Busolwe Town Council, and Butaleja Town Council.

According to district officials, a total of 45 farmer groups are expected to benefit from the initiative.

Through the cooperative model, participating farmers will establish milk collection centers to improve milk handling, storage and access to markets. The approach is expected to reduce post-harvest losses and strengthen the dairy value chain in the district.

Swama further explained that government will finance 80 percent of the required project resources, while farmers will contribute the remaining 20 percent through their respective groups.

"This co-funding arrangement promotes ownership of the project among farmers and ensures sustainability of the investments,"

he noted.

District Veterinary Officer Jackson Twebaze Ndahayo also advised farmers to prioritize pasture development in order to improve livestock productivity.

“If farmers want to benefit fully from dairy farming, they must plan for proper feeding. Setting aside land for pasture will help maintain healthy animals and increase milk production,” Ndahayo said.

He added that farmers will contribute a small fee toward animal health services, including treatment and vaccinations, in order to sustain veterinary support within communities.

Local leaders welcomed the initiative, noting that strengthening farmer cooperatives will not only increase milk production but also enhance market access and improve household livelihoods.

The dairy farming program forms part of the government’s broader efforts to modernize agriculture, promote climate-smart farming practices and support farmers in Bukedi Region to participate in commercial agriculture and improve their incomes



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