



Ministry of Water and Environment



The Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week, March 2022

WATER AND ENVIRONMENT FOR PEACE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION



INSIDE

Foreword 1

Creating Awareness 2

Conserving for Generations 6

The Change We want 9

Running Forward 11

Change Begins With Me



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Cover picture: Some of the young participants in the Save River Mpanga marathon push to the finish line near Booma Grounds, Fort Portal Tourism City.

Inside cover picture: Lake Nyinambuga located in Kibale Forest is one of the crater lakes in the Rwenzori region.

FOREWORD



Dr Guma Brian Emmanuel, Team Leader AWMZ

We are pleased to share the highlights of the Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week (ARWEWK), which ran from 13 to 20 March 2022 under the theme Water and environment resources for peace and socio-economic transformation in Uganda. Since 2019, the Albertine region has been participating in precursor events in the build-up to the Uganda Water and Environment Week. The Albert Water Management Zone (AWMZ) spearheaded the preparations of the 4th Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week (ARWEWK) alongside other MWE structures – the Rural Water and Sanitation Regional Centre-5, LEAF II Project, Mid-Western Umbrella of Water and Sanitation, and Urban Water and Sanitation Development Facility.

The ARWEWK 2022 focused on creating awareness on water resources management and reached about two million people resident in the districts of Kamwenge, Kyejono, Bunyangabu, Kasese, and Kabarole. This is a critical step in implementing the Parish Development Model. Central to the model's success is mindset change, which is pivotal to improved water resources management.



We have touched the horizon of self-consciousness among the different age groups on catchment protection, water quality and sustainable use.

Dr. Brian E. Guma

This ARWEWK would not have been possible without the support of our partners and stakeholders who not only sponsored and participated in the events, but are also contributing to the National Development Plan III and the UN SDG for sustainable water and environment resources management through their programmes in the Albertine region. We thank the cultural and religious institutions, civil society organisations, development agencies, district local governments and the private sector for their committed partnership with the Ministry of Water and Environment regional structures.

Guma Brian Emmanuel (PhD)
Team Leader, Albert Water Management Zone

CREATING AWARENESS

Human beings and the natural environment have a reciprocal relationship: Human activity has an impact on the environment and the state of the environment determines the quality of water sanitation and hygiene, and therefore the quality of life of the people. Often however, people are oblivious of the power they wield over the land, air, water bodies, forests, plants, birds and animals, either to destroy them or sustainably optimize for generations.

The Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week was an opportunity to spread the word to the local communities on how critical the natural resources are to their well-being and how they can be involved in conserving them. Gatherings and social activities including games and sports, music, dance and visual arts were organised in various locations throughout the week to create awareness among young and old, women and men alike about water and environment resources management.



Hon. Richard Rwabuhinga, Kabarole District Chairman hands over the trophy to Busooro Football Club, winners of the Sanitation Cup 2022

Sports for sanitation: Busooro and Rwengaju face-off in football match

Kabarole District Local Government together with AWMZ organised a football match between Busooro and Rwengaju sub-county teams at Kyambogo grounds in Rwengaju to compete for the annual sanitation cup. About 300 people who gathered as spectators received information about the interconnection between the environment and health.

Political leaders shared messages on personal responsibility to hygiene, and encouraged the people to adopt and maintain good sanitation practices. Busooro football club won the Sanitation Cup and received their trophy at the district event at Busooro headquarters. The football match profiled youth as champions of sanitation and hygiene, recognizing the playing teams at the ARWEWK district event.



Community members in Kasese central raise awareness about climate change using music dance and drama

Charity begins at home: The home improvement campaigns

At Kaswa in Busooro Sub-county, ARWEWK participants led by the sub-county political leaders rallied the community to cleanup the local trading center. Officials from district health department utilized the opportunity to share findings of the state of homes sanitation and hygiene assessment conducted in 2021 as a baseline for the home improvement campaign.

The home improvement campaign is an initiative of Kabarole District Local Government supported by IRC, through which the district is implementing the target of its WASH masterplan to eliminate open defecation in all villages by 2030.

“ We made home visits in selected sub-counties, and carried out an evaluation using participatory tools that guide household heads to identify the hygiene and sanitation gaps in the homes themselves. This triggers them to desire and commit to change their own home environments,” says Cecilia Birungi, District Health Inspector, Kabarole.

The target is to make sure that households have all the facilities to the standards prescribed by Uganda Public Health Act CAP 269 (194): a designated kitchen separate from the main house/ sleeping area, a kitchen utensils rack, an exclusive pit latrine with clean water and soap for hand-washing, bath shelters, proper garbage disposal, and proper water chain management.



Kabarole District Chairman, Hon. Richard Rwabuhinga



80% of the disease burden in our health facilities is attributed to infections caused by poor sanitation and hygiene in our homes. The money and time we spend on seeking treatment can be saved for income generating activities and educating our children.

Hon. Richard Rwabuhinga

20 households were recognised for excellent home hygiene and sanitation improvement as a result of the home improvement campaigns at the ARWEWK event jointly supported by MWE-MWUS and IRC. The certificate awards to champions will inspire positive behavior change from the grassroots, until every home, village and subcounty and ultimately the whole district is open-defecation free.



Left: Ms Juliet Ayesiga, RDC Kabarole gives a certificate to one of the home hygiene champions. Right: Hon. Rwabuhinga and Ms. Ayesiga in a group picture with the MWE regional, Kabarole district and civil society partner officials at the event

Raising voices: Youth debate the future of water and environment



Students of Rubona Secondary School who won the debate competition.

The ARWEWK created space for youth to engage in intellectual debate about the policies and practices concerning water, environment and climate change in Uganda.

Secondary Schools and Universities in the region presented teams to compete in the qualifiers to the national water and environment youth debate tournament organized by Youth Go Green.



University Student during the debate competition.

At the Fort Portal Youth Center, Fins Medical University, Mountain of the Moon University, Pentecostal University and TEAM University tackled the theme “Water Conservation: A necessity of the present to secure the future.” The debate question was “Water Conservation: Is it climate change or bad water governance?” Fins University emerged winner at regional level (9 points) and went on to be crowned as water and environment youth debate champion at the national event in Kampala on 25 March 2022.

Six Secondary Schools namely Nyakasura School, Maria Gorette SS, Fort Portal SSS, Kyebambe Girls SS, Rubona High School and Mpanga High School debated the motion: “This house shall restrict the use of water and environment resources to promote standards, quantity, purity and peaceful co-existence Globally by 2030”. Debators raised motions on the impact of privatization of water supply and distribution in Uganda; obligations of major polluter nations to refugees and border policies; enforcement of laws on environment protection; and the impact of oil and gas activities on the population in the Albertine region.

“A soft hand will not stop people from destroying the environment; there will always be bad people that need an iron hand,” Dr Brian Guma applauded the youth for influencing positive policy change to protect the climate, by raising their voices on debate platforms.



I was shaken 50 villages were washed away in one of the landslides in Bududa. My dream of engaging youths to save the environment is now a reality. I encourage you to make a difference by planting trees and keeping the water catchments clean

*Edwin Muhumuza,
Founder of Youth Go Green*



Youth debate winners receive their trophy from 3rd Deputy PM Rt. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga at the national event in Kampala. Looking on (L) is Hon Beatrice Anywar, State Minister of Environment

Photo credit: Water For People Uganda



Mr. Sam Tusiime (right), Team Leader RWSRC-5 addressing participants and community members during primary school debates at Yerya Primary School in Bunyangabu



Water can be a source of conflict in our homes and in the country if it is not enough for everyone's benefit. I encourage the children not to stop at planting, but to nurture the trees to growth

*Sam T. Tusiime,
Team Leader Rural Water and Sanitation
Regional Center-5*

In Bunyangabu district, the junior school WASH debate competition was organized by JESE and Caritas-Fort Portal HEWASA and attended by teachers, Parents, school management committee and teams from the MWE regional units and district local government.

Four primary schools pupils gathered at St. John's Yerya Primary School in Kateeba Sub County, with teams debating the motion

"Man Has Done More Harm than Good on Water and Environment". St. Johns Yerya emerged winner and took the grand prize of a goat.

Creating awareness was the core agenda of the ARWEWK with the key message that every one – school children, youth, women and men alike - has a role to play in ensuring the quality and quantity of water is safeguarded for the current and future generations.



Yerya Primary School debators club receive the champion's prize of a goat. Debate competitions and music dance and drama were part of the activities to inspire behaviour change among children



CONSERVING FOR GENERATIONS

Water resource protection and tree planting



Hon Gilbert Rubaihayo Kyenjojo District Chairman hands over seedlings to landowners along Aswa Catchment to protect the buffer zone.

Water supply in the Albertine region is largely dependent on gravity flow schemes served by the river catchments.

In Kyenjojo district, River Aswa catchment is the main water source for the Kyenjojo – Katooke Strategic Town Water Supply and Sanitation Project (STWSSP). The project has 2000 promotional connections and 15 public standposts to benefit the Urban poor. For the population to enjoy a clean and consistent water supply, the Aswa catchment must be sustainably harnessed to ensure minimal water treatment costs.

In Bunyangabu district, the Vice-chairperson of Bunyangabu district Mr John Manume demonstrated tree-planting at St. Johns Yeriya Primary School and the Bunyangabu district Local government Headquarters as a way of mitigating the impact of climate change.

At the event organized by MWE-UWSSD, political leaders and technical officials from the district and Ministry of Water and Environment regional units encouraged people to plant indigenous (water-friendly) tree species in their gardens to protect for the Aswa catchment.

300 grevillea tree seedlings of the 4000 targetted were distributed to people in the communities living along the River Aswa catchment.



The church has ample land along the river Mpanga, and we are committed to plant as many trees as you can give us, to cover all the space surrounding the river, especially if they are water-friendly species,”

*Msgr. Isaiah Mayombo Adyeri,
Fort Portal Diocese*

St Charles Lwanga, a catholic church that borders R. Mpanga received 200 tree seedlings from AWMZ, to support efforts aimed at protecting the riverbanks and reducing the siltation.



Msgr. Isaiah Mayombo Adyeri, the Vica general Fort portal Diocese Fr. Emmanuel Baguma parish priest town church and Fr. Moses Mugabo at St Charles Lwanga receive tree seedlings from AWMZ team

Protecting River Nyamwamba

River Nyamwamba is the main source of water for agriculture and domestic use in Kasese district. However, it has suffered adverse climate shocks in the recent past, notably torrential floods which destroy lives and property.

With support from the World Bank, the Ministry of Water and Environment through the regional management zone has been implementing catchment management measures in the Nyamwamba area, since October 2021

The ARWEWK event in Kasese organized by MIFA, WWF and NRD1 was punctuated by a 6km walk from the Rukoki to Nyamwamba West.

Participants planted bamboo and fruit trees along the river bank at Nyakasanga. Bamboo holds soils together and reduces the siltation and impacts of flooding in the riparian community

Several stakeholders participated in the planting process, including the political leaders, Deputy Prime Minister Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu, Bishop Rwenzori diocese, government officials from Uganda Wildlife Authority and the MWE/Directorate of Water Resources Management, private contractors MIFA, NRD1 and WWF, school communities as well as local residents.



Planting bamboo trees along the Nyamwamba riverbank, in Kasese District



An artist view of River Nyamwamba where World Bank is implementing Catchment Management Measures under the Integrated Water Management Development Project. Right, Dr. Guma AWMZ explaining the catchment model

Showcasing sustainable use of environment resources

In Kamwenge district, MWE partners implementing water and environment management projects in the Albertine region show-cased innovations and products from conservation and sustainable use at a public event organized by CARE International.



I encourage all households to join the tree-planting campaign by planting Mvule, Mangoes and Jack fruit trees for shade formation, sale of fruits, and providing firewood. This is not only increase access to water but will also conserve our resources for longer,”

*Hon. Joseph Karungi Chairman
Kamwenge DLG.*

Sustainable natural resource initiatives showcase included:

- Energy-saving charcoal/ briquettes that last longer and cost-effective
- Solar systems used as a source of energy for cooking
- Latrine and septic tank emptiers, both manual and motorised.

Kamwenge District Local Government reported to have planted 2.3 million trees in 2021 with support of partners.

Why every person, young and old, should plant and nurture a tree.

- It is a source of oxygen for all living organisms.
- It helps in formation of rain water that provides water for the ecosystem and humans.
- It acts as a windbreaker on building structures.
- It is a source of energy like firewood.
- It is a source of building materials such as poles and timber.



Participating organisations exhibit briquettes as an environment-friendly fuel alternative to charcoal in Kamwenge district

PICTORIAL



Cleaning Fort Portal City



A student of Kilembe SS presents a passionate song about climate change



Certificate given to champions of the home improvement campaigns



Learning about climate change and environment protection through music and dance



Winner of 21km race in Save River Mpanga marathon receives cash prize of 150000ugx



Murungi Stella Deputy Mayor Fort Portal City addressing participants at Mpanga market

THE CHANGE WE WANT

A Clean Fort Portal Tourism City.

Fort Portal like any other growing city suffers the challenges typical of poor solid waste management and inadequate safe water supply. Flowing through the city is River Mpanga as the major water source which is contaminated by dumping waste plastic from the commercial activities. The city clean up focused on Mpanga and Kabundeire markets and was organized jointly by partners of MWE/AWMZ and RWSRC-5, including IRC, HEWASA, PROTOS – Join For Water, JESE, NRD, Kyaninga Forest Foundation, and traders in Fort Portal City.

The Deputy Mayor of Fort Portal City urged residents to utilise litter bins provided by every shop. She thanked students from the city schools for being good ambassadors in promoting conservation of water and the environment.

A resolution was generated that such cleanups be carried out at least quarterly by the Kabarole District WASH Task Team with support from the partners.



Participants in the ARWEWK mobilise city dwellers to keep Fort Portal City clean



Traders at Kabundeire Market in Fort Portal City participate in the clean-up exercise

Safely managed sanitation in schools

At various schools visited during the water week, school management committee representatives expressed frustration caused by inadequate water supply, especially in the dry season. Instead of studying, children spend a substantial part of their time at school moving long distances to collect water from the streams which is often polluted. Due to unsafe water and poor sanitation, school children are exposed to hygiene related infections including typhoid, cholera, and dysentery.



We thank Join-For-Water for the new water-borne toilet, but now we need more rain-water harvesting and storage tanks so that the children can utilize the new facility,

Mugabo Steven, Chairman PTA Buhara Primary School

A sanitation facility constructed at Buhara Primary School by Join For Water through NRDl was commissioned.



The new sanitation facility and rain water harvesting tank constructed by NRDl at Buhara Primary School, Kichwamba Sub-county.



Pupils of Buhara Primary school Kichwamba sub county in a school band parade match during the launching of sanitation facility and rain water harvesting tank by NRDl

RUNNING FORWARD

A marathon to Save River Mpanga



Running to Save River Mpanga in Fort Portal March 20, 2022.

River Mpanga is often referred to as the umbilical cord of the Albertine region. It flows from the Rwenzori Mountains through the districts of Kabarole, Kyenjojo and Kamwenge, and feeds into Lake George, serving more than 1.2million people on its path. The river has been severely affected by human encroachment, sand and stone extraction, poor agricultural practices, and pollution. Climate shocks are on the rise, with water levels of River Mpanga reducing mainly due to pollution of the catchment from the surrounding urban centres.

The Save River Mpanga campaign brings together cultural, religious, government, civil society and local community leaders to raise a voice against this devastation and restore the river's former glory. As a contribution to this campaign, Albertine Regional Water Week.

Partners pledged continued support to the cause to restore the glory of River Mpanga. "R. Mpanga is our core source of water for production as well as home use, and we must protect and conserve it from damage and exploitation. Thank you for being a part of the united force to save River Mpanga," The Chairman LC5 of Kabarole district, Mr Rwabuhinga Richard

included the Save River Mpanga marathon as its peak event, organized by WWF. The Save River Mpanga marathoners had a choice of 5km, 10km and 21km routes starting at Booma grounds in Fort Portal City. The main objective of the marathon was to create awareness of the importance of preserving the river Mpanga and a long-term goal of planting 10 million trees for social and economic development.

The marathon attracted over 400 people including students from surrounding institutions, staff teams from corporate and parastatal entities within Kabarole district, parastatal bodies, Tooro Kingdom, religious institutions, and the general public. Winners for the different categories were awarded a cash prize envelope of Uganda Shillings 150,000, 100,000 and 50,000 for the winner, second and third runners up, respectively.

"Our King Oyo Nyimba Kabamba Iguru Rukidi IV, is a champion of planting trees within the Mpanga catchment area. I am happy that the people have joined His Majesty in this great cause," Minister of Tourism, Tooro Kingdom, Hon Joan Kantu Else.



Participants of The Save River Mpanga Marathon at Boma grounds in Fort Portal March 20, 2022



The Minister of Tourism, Tooro Kingdom, Hon Joan Kantu Else

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ARWEWK 2022

- Continuous awareness-raising about activities causing catchment degradation in the region is critical for mindset change.
- The service industry such as hotels /tourist lodges, financial institutions, electricity distribution companies (UMEME) and many others, should always be involved.
- Financial support from the Ministry of Water and Environment is necessary to facilitate greater success of the ARWEWK in future.
- Government should allocate more funding to restore the different catchments in the Albertine region.
- The regional structures and partners should encourage the promotion and use of alternative energy sources such as briquettes.
- The Mpanga market authority and Fort Portal city officials should take the lead on implementing the resolution made to hold quarterly cleanups of the market area.
- District local governments should lobby for increased allocation of financial and human capacity to monitor and enforce the prevailing environment protection laws.
- Government should enforce the polluter-pay principle as a means of reducing pollution.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Water and Environment regional units acknowledge the partnership and sponsorship of various partners listed in organising a successful Albertine Regional Water and Environment Week 2022: Tooro Kingdom, Turikumwe, Caritas-Fort Portal HEWASA (Health Through Water and Sanitation), Join for Water, IRC International Water and Sanitation Resource Center, Water for People, CARE International, Rwenzori Aid, Tooro Botanical Gardens (TBG), World Wide Fund for Nature, AAID, Mubuku Integrated Farmers Association, NRD (Natural Resources Defense Initiative), Kabarole DLG, Kasese DLG, Kamwenge DLG, Centenary Bank, EMS Mpanga and the Media fraternity.





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