

BUSOGA TIMES

NUP goes to sleep in **Busoga**

For how long will NUP rely on Bobi Wine's visits to Busoga?



The National Unity Platform (NUP), the leading opposition political party, heavily relies on the popularity of Bobi Wine, its founding president, and now faces an uphill task to rally its people power supporters in Busoga to build on the successes of 2021 ahead of 2026, as they attempt to dislodge Museveni & the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM).



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EDITORIAL

WE WILL GROW WITH YOU



The year 2025 got off to a good start for us at Busoga Times when we published our inaugural monthly digital magazine in January. We are glad to report that we have gotten encouraging feedback from you, our readers. We are grateful and thankful for that. We want to grow with you, and our promise and commitment is to provide you with news content that empowers you, our readers, wherever you are and develops Busoga and Uganda at large.

What you are reading now is our follow-up edition and February issue. We have meticulously packaged this issue to provoke and indulge you on some of the important matters happening in Busoga. While we couldn't exhaust all the important topics occurring in Busoga, we bring you what we judged to be crucial and topical.

In our lead story, we discuss the National Unity Platform and its prospects in Busoga—many political pundits believe that opposition political party is not maximising its potential. We have picked commentaries from some of its leaders and supporters. Unfortunately, the parties top leaders couldn't respond to our requests for interviews and probing. We hope that next time we will be lucky.

Still in the political arena, we examine Moses Bigirwa's proposal of regionalising the fight to remove President Yoweri Museveni from power. We will accept your opinions and proposals on that topic through the available channels and addresses.

In this issue, we have two important interviews from two historical Basoga from Buyende district: the legendary Steven Malagala who has sung his way into our hearts over the years and Eng. Moses Magogo, the FUFA President and MP for Budiope East. Malagala tells his musical story and his upcoming album launch while we discuss CHAN 2024 and football matters with Magogo.

In the education sector, Nyago Bosco, a distinguished teacher, explains what the new competence-based curriculum means and its relevance. Also, in the education sector, read about the opportunities that New Life Schools Buwaidha is presenting to the people of Buyende.

Please feel free to drop us an email, SMS, a call, or a WhatsApp text to discuss the contents in this magazine, our news website, and social media pages. Let's discuss matters of Busoga anytime.

Thanks.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Baz Waiswa". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Editor

For how long will NUP rely on Bobi Wine's visits to Busoga to create *vibe*?



By: BAZ WAISWA

Photography: INTERNET/NUP

The political rise of Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, also known as Bobi Wine, the President of the National Unity Platform (NUP), is well documented, and Busoga features prominently in those pages. When he was elected Member of Parliament for Kyadondo East in a by-election, he used his musical stardom to charm the young Ugandans across the country. This was seen in his influence in the by-elections in Jinja and Bugiri that brought Paul Mwiru and Asuman Basalirwa to Parliament, respectively.

Riding on the People Power wave and rave, Bobi Wine would become bigger than Parliament material. The People Power movement then morphed into the National Unity Platform (NUP), a political party on whose card and mandate he stood for presidency in 2021 against the incumbent and Uganda's longest ruling president, Yoweri Museveni. While Bobi Wine was unable to get the desired but elusive victory, citing electoral malpractices, the singing politician and NUP exceptionally performed well in Busoga, dealing Museveni a heavy blow. For the first time, Busoga was a hotbed for the opposition. Museveni embarrassingly lost ground to NUP, a novice political party.



Bobi Wine, aka Ngobi, is loved in Busoga

Dormant leaders mismanaging the party

It was hoped that NUP would build on this success to grow its support base in Busoga. But as things look, this is not the case. The party seems to have entered into a deep sleeping mode, a deep slumber. The vibrancy is waning; the vibe is down; foot soldiers are unenchanted; the leaders are in withdrawn mode, and the mojo is down.

This has been made worse by the restrictive political environment that regime has subjected them to. A lack of vibrant leadership, a witch hunt from the regime, and limited resources have left NUP at a position of a disadvantage, especially with an onslaught from the National Resistance Movement—as evidenced during President Museveni's Parish Development Model assessment tour.

The dormancy being exhibited by NUP as the country heads to the 2026 general elections can be blamed on

lacking proper leadership in the region, at least according to Iddi Zibondwe, the NUP registrar of Buyende district. He laments that NUP's leadership in Busoga is dead and advises that the party should come out and 'address the leadership gaps in Busoga' for the party to become stronger.

"The party leaders at the top have not given the party leaders at the grassroots time and attention to orient them to the ideologies of the party. This has made the party dormant in Busoga. The leaders have not cared to mobilise other party leaders at the lower levels. There is a gap between the top and the bottom," Zibondwe said in an interview, adding that the NUP leadership structure in Busoga is weak, with roles that are not well defined.

Party still strong

Despite all these distracting scares, Zibondwe is well aware of

the strengths of the party he serves and promotes. A position he shares with comedian Swengere, real name Muyonjo Hussein. The two agree that NUP is still strong in Busoga. Swengere, a vocal and influential NUP supporter seeking to vie for Member of Parliament for the Jinja North constituency, acknowledges that NUP still has the biggest following in the region.

"We have been joined by people who were not with us in the last election because they didn't know who we are, and in these four years we have been engaging them and explaining who we are and why they should trust NUP for a better Uganda," Swengere told Busoga Times in an interview on the state of NUP in Busoga.

This strength, however, seems to be hinged on the fame and strength of Bobi Wine rather than the mobilisation works of the people appointed to lead NUP in Busoga. The party seems to wake up when the party president visits the region with droves of supporters following his motorcade, as was the case when he visited Kamuli last year and the latest visit to Kigulu in Iganga. Asked if NUP is over-relying on Bobi Wine's personality, Swengere was quick to refute it, claiming that they are 'mobilising for the party day and night'. "We are conducting activities for the party in the region only that maybe you as a journalist have your area of interest to capture the news, and that's only when the President visits us, but we as leaders are very active, and we are doing our work. Lastly, as you know, we are dealing with heartless people in the government; most of our activities are being conducted covertly," Swengere explained.

Unresolved party wrangles in Busoga

The internal wrangles that rocked NUP in Busoga in 2023 hit the party below the belt. The party is still paying the price because of the irreconcilable differences these rifts caused among the party leadership. These wrangles resulted in the departure of Bigirwa; he was a strong pillar in the party. NUP has never been the same since those wrangles, Zibondwe says, adding that there is a noticeable decline in NUP since the manifestation of those wrangles.

When these wrangles emerged, the party leadership in Kampala intervened and investigated, and a report that was not made public was made with recommendations. While Bobi Wine, as the party president, was unhappy with the development, he and the party chose not to punish the bickering parties; instead, they preached reconciliation. This reconciliation never happened, and now the party is underperforming because the egos that clashed never mended.

In all this, Swengere has remained adamant that these wrangles haven't affected the party in any way because it is never about individuals but Ugandans who are being abused by the government in power.



Party supporters like Swengere say all is well for NUP in Busoga There is work to do

Bobi Wine recently was in Iganga district to carry out some philanthropy work where, together with the NUP team, he donated building materials to Mawagala Primary School in Nawanyingi. The school needed help to complete the construction of a classroom block that has stalled for over 20 years. The team donated 12,000 bricks and 100 bags of cement and finances to purchase sand and other items. The National Unity Platform office at Kadaago Village, Kigulu North Constituency, to conduct mobilisation works.

The party president used the rallies in Iganga to encourage the people of Busoga to be part of the revolution and embrace the protest vote to overwhelm the regime in 2026. To many political pundits, this was an energising message to the NUP supporters in Busoga.

While Bobi Wine's message was timely and well delivered, for party leaders like Zibondwe in Buyende, the party needs to do a lot more to reenergise the foot soldiers in the region. He says NUP should revisit its structure and bring back the foot soldiers who laid the ground for the party to thrive in 2021.



What if Ugandans listened to Moses Bigirwa's political proposals?

By: BAZ WAISWA

Photography: COURTESY/INTERNET

Everyone who has tried to remove President Yoweri Museveni from power, either by force or through democratic means, has miserably failed — it is now 39 years since the son of Amos Kaguta in Rwakitura took over power as a rebel in 1986.

Rebellions in the north, east, southwest, and central Uganda have been formed against him, but the man with the hat has crushed them all. Politicians and political parties have toyed with the democratic route but have come short of removing Museveni.

Just like he has been able to build a strong, unbeatable army, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), Museveni has also built a strong and cult-like political base using the National Resistance Movement (NRM) machinery, a political party that morphed out of the National Resistance Army (NRA), a rebel outfit that brought him to power.

Periodical national elections every five years since 1996 have been a channel through which Museveni has legitimised his unending action-packed rule, even



Moses Bigirwa, founder of Eastern Revolutionary Platform

though his political and social opponents claim that these voting exercises have been abused with vote rigging, election violence, and many other alleged undemocratic practices.

Legalising a dictatorship

Museveni's overstay in power has made him christened a dictator by people unfriendly to his work methods and have called his regime a junta. He maintains that he has been able to stay in power through democratic means and that his reign is not a dictatorship. He has been accused of making illegalities legal by using the parliament and judiciary. Since the return to multiparty politics, Museveni has based

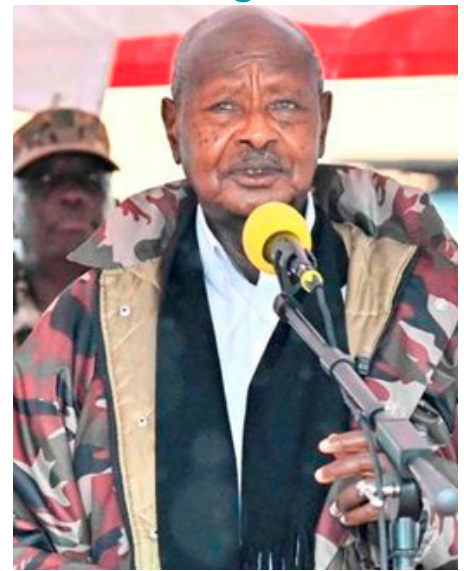
his power on the numbers in parliament that are on his side to get his way around maintaining his tight grip on power. The parliament, which he dominates through his ruling political party, the NRM, was able to remove the two-term presidential limit to allow him to contest for president until he gets tired or dies. The same parliament removed the 75-year age limit to allow him to contest without any age limitation. With a Parliament on his leash, Museveni has been able to legalise or make legal what he wants, and that which enables him to rule Uganda. Democratically abnormal decisions have been made by Parliament to sanitise Museveni's extended rule.

Some political leaders allege that laws like the Public Order Management Act (POMA), which requires Ugandans to seek permission from the Inspector General of Police (IGP) to hold any public gathering, have been passed targeting opposition politicians and their activities. Police have, on many occasions, used this law to stop or disburse meetings by opposition leaders.

It is believed that Museveni has used his popularity and political tokenism to create more constituencies across the country to get more supportive members of parliament who will do as he orders them to do. That is how Uganda has ended up with over 520 MPs – including women MPs representing the hundreds of districts created by the Museveni regime. With such contested political methods, it is becoming evident that it will be hard to beat Museveni and eventually remove him out of power using the very methods that have failed to work for Dr. Paul Kawanga Ssemwogerere, Dr. Kizza Besigye, and now Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, also known as Bobi Wine.

The grand proposed Bigirwa strategy

It is at this point that Moses Bigirwa, the founding president of the Eastern



Dr Besigye has tried to remove Museveni from power with no success

Revolutionary Platform (ERP), is proposing a change in tactics to counter and defeat Museveni, starting with the 2026 national elections.

On 24 July 2024, Bigirwa wrote to sixteen leading opposition political parties and organisations with a proposal that would see Museveni lose the numbers in parliament. Bigirwa's strategy requires that the opposition put their efforts on the parliamentary elections if they need to have change. "As a legislative arm, it [parliament] can be used to cripple the regime," Bigirwa says of his plan.

Bigirwa also wants opposition politicians in the country to focus and deploy their resources in subregions where they are loved, supported, and strong, instead of focusing on an entire country, even in places where they are not supported.

According to Bigirwa, Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) should focus on delivering Teso, Bugishu, Bukedi, Kasese and parts of Acholi

and Lango, while also picking a few seats from Central and Western regions. Then, the Alliance for National Transformation (ANT) should concentrate solely on Ankole under Mugisha Muntu's leadership. The National Economic Empowerment Dialogue (NEED) should put all its efforts on Bunyoro, leveraging Joseph Kabuleta's influence.

The Uganda People's Congress (UPC) should focus on Lango and parts of Acholi. The National Unity Platform (NUP) under Bobi Wine and the Democratic Alliance (DA) under Mathias Mpuuga should prioritise Central Uganda (Buganda), where they have the capacity to win all seats. The Democratic Party (DP) should concentrate on Acholi and select areas of Buganda. JEEMA and ERP should target Busoga and some parts of Central Uganda by JEEMA. The People's Progressive Party



Moses Bigirwa has a proposal that will see opposition capture Parliament

with its presence in Acholi through Hon. Santa Okot, can influence and win additional seats in that region. The People's Front for Freedom (PFF), under Dr. Kizza Besigye, can effectively deliver Kigezi. Bigirwa then wonders: With this strategy, how will Museveni's NRM win a majority in Parliament? Following this plan, the opposition could secure over 300 MPs in the 12th Parliament! We strongly urge all opposition parties to embrace this strategy; it's our best chance to achieve a united front and victory.

It is a game of numbers

In the letter to the sixteen political parties, Bigirwa worked the numbers, and they made perfect sense — if things happen as he has calculated. This is his math: Eastern Uganda, comprising subregions of Elgon, Kiira (Busoga), and Teso, represents among others) has 19 MPs, while a total of 101 constituencies, 40 districts, and three special

interest group representatives (youth, elderly, and PWDs). Of the directly elected MPs, 45 are from Elgon, 32 from Kiira, and 24 from Teso. The western region has 92 constituencies, 29 districts, and three special interest group representatives (youth, elderly, and PWDs). The southwestern part has 53 MPs, the Midwest (Tooro and Rwenzori) has 19 MPs, and 21 MPs are from Bunyoro. In the North, there are 83 constituencies, 41 districts, and three special interest group representatives, giving the region a total of 127 MPs — these include 40 MPs from Acholi and Lango, 26 from West Nile, and 17 in Karamoja. The central region has 76 constituencies, 26 districts, and three representatives of special interest groups, giving it 105 MPs - of the directly elected MPs, 25 are in Greater Kampala (Kampala, Wakiso, and Mukono). The area of Central North (Mubede, Nakaseke, Luwero, Nakasongola, and Kayunga, Central South (Greater Masaka) has 32 MPs.

How it will work and by who

Bigirwa suggests that different parties and personalities are allocated where they can best achieve results. For example, if Mugisha Muntu (ANT) focused on Ankole, he can fetch 15 MPs; Dr. Kizza Besigye (PFF) in Kigezi can get 10 MPs; Jack Sabiti (FDC) in Kigezi can also get 13 MPs; Joseph Kabuleta (NEED) in Bunyoro can get 15 MPs; Hassan Kaps Fungaroo (FDC) in West Nile can earn 10 MPs; Kasiano Wadri, also in West Nile, can get 15 MPs; and Nobert Mao (DP) in Acholi can get 20 MPs. Gilbert Oulanyah and Odongo Otto (FDC) in Acholi can get 3 MPs, Santa Okot (PPP) in Acholi can get 4 MPs, Jimmy Akena (UPC) in Lango and Karamoja can get 20 MPs, Patrick Amuriat (FDC) in Teso and Sebei can get 20 MPs, Nandala Mafabi (FDC) and John Nambeshe (NUP) can get 30 MPs, Eastern Revolutionary Front (Busoga) can get 30 MPs, Asuman Basalirwa (JEEMA) in Busoga can get 5 MPs, Bobi Wine (NUP) in Buganda (80 MPs), and Mathias Mpuuga (DA) in Greater Masaka can get 10 MPs. This totals to 300 MPs. Bigirwa explains that his proposal extends beyond mere electoral expediency; that it is a vital response mechanism to address the pressing concerns of Ugandans disillusioned with the status quo.

"By prioritising this initiative, we can effectively mitigate the escalating tensions and provide a constructive outlet for widespread discontent, thereby averting a massive catastrophic uprising against the regime," Bigirwa notes. To win these parliamentary seats, Bigirwa says it requires a unified approach, including convening opposition party meetings, establishing coordinating committees, creating campaign plans, and forming strategic alliances to build support and momentum.

Making sense of Bigirwa's proposal

This is a plan that can work, at least according to Moses Kasibante, the former MP for Lubaga North. Kasibante is of the view that the political playground should be extended beyond Kampala so as to alienate Museveni and NRM. This, he says, can be done if big politicians go back to their rural areas and preach the gospel of political change. "The Eastern Revolutionary Platform is saying that we can

ably speak Lusoga, and the power we have, we got it from Busoga; let's not take it to Kampala. Let us liberate Busoga. Imagine if Rubongoya [Secretary General of NUP] takes the western revolutionary front and delivers western Uganda!" Kasibante said, encouraging people who want to remove Museveni to consider taking the battleground outside Kampala. Despite an elaborate proposal, it has received a cold reception from those Bigirwa thought would buy and lay an implementation strategy. Bigirwa has not received a response from the opposition parties, not even a rejection response.

Electoral Reform Bills to shape 2026 polls

The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Norbert Mao, recently told Parliament that the government is preparing to introduce bills containing proposed electoral reforms ahead of the 2026 general elections.

Mao revealed that the reforms include measures such as the introduction of body cameras at polling stations to ensure comprehensive recording of events during the voting process. The Minister also stated that the proposed law seeks to introduce stricter penalties for presiding officers found guilty of aiding vote rigging.

He emphasized that the government aims to implement robust technological measures to enhance election management, in line with the



Minister Norbet Mao

recommendations made by the Supreme Court following the 2016 presidential election petition filed by former presidential candidate Amama Mbabazi.

"I already presented the bill to the Cabinet, but it was referred to a committee chaired by Hon. Chris Baryomunsi, the Minister of Information, ICT, and

National Guidance, for further review. I hope that by Monday, he will report back to the Cabinet," Mao explained.

"Technology is crucial to addressing issues like ballot stuffing, where individuals who did not turn up at polling stations are recorded as having voted. The biometric records must match the number of ballots cast.

Additionally, we have introduced a provision in the law that imposes up to five years of imprisonment for presiding officers whose polling station results do not align with the machine records," he added.

Mao assured legislators that the reforms would be tabled in Parliament after Cabinet approval, allowing MPs to review and improve the proposals further.

MUSEVENI TOURS BUSOGA

But there is little PDM success to show amidst reported programme failures



President Museveni spent four days assessing the performance of Parish Development Model in Busoga

President Yoweri Museveni was last month, between January 22 and January 25, 2025, in the Busoga sub-region to assess the performance of the Parish Development Model (PDM), a programme that was touted and promoted by the government as the magic bullet to shoot down and kill the rampant poverty in the country. The Parish Development Model is an initiative introduced in Uganda in 2022 with the goal of reducing poverty at the grassroots. It seeks to shift people from subsistence farming and informal economy practices into a more integrated and formalised participation in the monetary economy. The President has had such tours in Bugisu, Karamoja, and Bukedi sub-

regions where he has been talking tough, ridiculing officials who have mismanaged the programme - some instances, he has threatened to arrest culprits failing the programme.

Busoga has had its share of PDM programme resources mismanagement as widely reported. It was, therefore, hoped that the President, armed with similar experiences from other regions, would address these challenges and provide redress alongside showcasing that which has been achieved.

While in Busoga, the President visited Buwala Tolofisa, a PDM farmer in Namutumba district; Mukasa Eliot, a PDM farmer in Luuka district; and Kazibwe Micheal, a farmer in Jinja district.

It was thought and hoped that the President would crack the whip and bring to book those whose actions are failing the PDM programme to progress.

This was never to be. The President went on a rampant rhetoric to praise the PDM as a successful programme that is drawing Basoga from the poverty that has over the years characterised the sub-region.

Unacceptable to have people with no source of income

The President described poverty as 'real darkness' and was happy that people in Busoga are using PDM to get out of this darkness because, according to the President, who has been in power for 39 years, it is unacceptable to have people who have no source of money.



The President visited Kazibwe Family Mixed Farm in Jinja district.

The President made the remarks while visiting the home of Tolofisa, one of the PDM beneficiaries in Namutumba Town Council, Namutumba District. Tolofisa informed the President that she received UGX 1 million in PDM money, and she added UGX 250,000 of her savings to buy cattle worth UGX 1.25 million. She said the cow now gives her 10 litres of milk daily. It is, however, good to note that the publicising of the Tolofisa's meagre success story overshadows the hundreds of cases that have misused and 'eaten' billions of Shillings not only in Namutumba but across Busoga. Cases of Parish Officers demanding a 'cut' of the UGX 1 million given to PDM beneficiaries are well documented and a public secret—issues that the President ought to address instead of lamenting helplessly like the rest of the Ugandans without the power to cause change.

Shifting from subsistence-based living to a money economy

In Luuka district, while visiting Mukasa Eliot, a PDM farmer in Buwanda village, Nawampiti sub-county, the President expressed contentment that the PDM has helped rural communities shift away from subsistence-based living towards more diversified, cash-based economic activities, thereby joining the money economy. Like many PDM cash recipients, Mukasa received UGX 1 million in the first phase of 2022/2023 and ventured into commercial farming, focusing on passion fruits and vegetables, and later bought goats and some iron sheets for his house. The President then went on a cash-gifting spree. He gave Mukasa UGX 10m to buy an acre of land at UGX 5m and buy more goats with the remaining UGX 5m. He also gave Mukasa another UGX 6 million for a motorcycle for transport. He also gave UGX 10 m to the other 10 farmers who converged at Mukasa's home.

Farmers must avoid politicising wealth creation

Michael Kazibwe, a model farmer in Namazala Village, Busede Sub-county, Jinja district, used the President's tour of the sub-region to call upon farmers in the Busoga to avoid politicising wealth creation. "There is no yellow money, red money, or blue money," he said, referring to the colours of some of the political parties in the country.

"If someone gives you an idea that improves your economy, take it, no matter who is telling you. Politicising everything won't put food on your table. For instance, when His Excellency advises us to use our land profitably, he is helping us. He won't come from the State House to eat our food. It's up to us to act on these messages for our own benefit," he added.

The farmer owns Kazibwe Family Mixed Farm, which includes coffee, cocoa, pigs, a banana plantation, cows, and other agricultural ventures.

While touring Kazibwe's farm, the President commended the people of Busoga for their growing efforts in wealth creation and transitioning out of poverty. He expressed optimism about the region's potential and highlighted the importance of resource utilisation and strategic planning.

Household income is critical to transforming lives

Addressing leaders in the Busoga sub-region at Mayuge District Playground, Mayuge District, on Thursday, 23rd January, 2025, the President emphasised that prioritising household incomes is critical to transforming lives even amidst infrastructure development challenges. This meeting was part of President Museveni's ongoing 4-day wealth

creation and Parish Development Model (PDM) performance assessment tour in the Busoga sub-region.

“To make our people get out of poverty, putting them in other issues is not correct. Focus on wealth creation. Once you deal with wealth creation in every home, other developments will follow.”

The President reiterated that Uganda’s progress depends on empowering households to generate income.

“The big problem you have is that there are so many things to do. But if you don’t prioritise homes, you will not progress. Homestead incomes must come first. Once all homesteads have income, everything else will fall into place.”

Loan schemes for boda boda riders

The President while addressing a boda boda mega rally in Iganga District promised to set up loan schemes for boda boda riders, with an intent of saving them from exploitation by private companies giving out boda bodas on loan.

“I’m going to set up loan schemes for you boda bodas per zone like Busoga. I don’t want to hear our children in the boda boda sector going to those people who are greedy for money,” he said.

The President’s move followed a complaint from Mr. Eria Musoba, the Coordinator of Boda Boda Chairmen in Busoga Sub-region who reported to him that they were being exploited by companies which give out boda bodas on high interest loans.

President Museveni assured the boda boda riders that he will support them by giving them good loans so that they are able to have their own boda bodas, earn money and improve their livelihoods.

He however advised them to be versatile and diverse whereby they are able to take part in other income generating activities apart from boda bodas.



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New Life Pre-School graduation

Buyende happy with progress school is making as primary section starts

The coming of New Life Schools in Buwaidha, Nakabira Sub County has improved education services and standards in Buyende district, parents and community leaders testified during the New Life Pre-School graduation on 25th January 2025 at the school campus in Buwaidha. At a fun filled day, 42 nursery learners (top class) graduated and qualified to start primary education this year. Prince Arnold Nadioppe represented the Kyabazinga, His Majesty William Wilberforce Gabula Nadioppe IV, as the chief guest. The Kyabazinga encouraged parents in the kingdom to educate their children to make Busoga a better place. Eng. Gerald Isabirye, one of the directors of the school, told parents that this year, they have opened the primary section starting with Primary One and Primary Two. He also unveiled the new school uniform as parents had requested.





**2025
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The best school in
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ABOUT US

New Life Pre-School is a multipurpose-built school in Buwaidha Zone, Nakabira Sub County in Buyende district. It was launched by the Kyabazinga of Busoga, His Majesty William Wilberforce Gabula Nadiope IV, on Saturday 28th January 2023.

OUR FACILITIES

- Newlife Church
- Library
- Dinning Room
- School Shuttle
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Photo gallery: It's a promising 2025 start for Kyabazinga and Busoga



The year 2025 has gotten off on a good note for the Kyabazinga, His Majesty William Wilberforce Gabula Nadiope IV, and Inhaiffe, Her Royal Highness Jovia Mutesi. The king is in good shape to serve his people. To start off his duties in the new year, the Kyabazinga and Inhaiffe hosted a luncheon for Basoga Public Officers at Igenge Palace in Bugembe, Jinja City, on January 3rd, 2025, where the new Executive Director at KCCA, Hajati Sharifa Buzeki, and her deputy, Benon Moses Kigenyi, were recognised. The Kyabazinga presided over the launch of the second edition of the MTN Busoga Cycling Championship and rolled out the partnership with UNAIDS that looks at combating teenage pregnancies in Busoga.



What you need to know about the competency-based curriculum and its relevance

By Nyago Bosco

The Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Uganda is designed to address the challenges of the traditional education system by focusing on practical skills, problem-solving, and real-world application of knowledge.

Its relevance and importance in the Ugandan context include: Skills-Oriented learning—unlike the old content-heavy curriculum, CBC emphasises hands-on skills, preparing learners for employment and entrepreneurship; Alignment with National Development Goals—the CBC supports Uganda's Vision 2040 by producing a skilled workforce for economic growth and industrialisation; Enhancing Critical Thinking—it encourages learners to analyse problems, think creatively, and develop innovative solutions, which is crucial for national development; and bridging the Skills Gap—many Ugandan graduates face unemployment due to a lack of practical skills. CBC ensures students acquire relevant competencies required in the job market. Others are Promoting Inclusivity and Adaptability – the curriculum is designed to accommodate diverse learning needs and abilities, making education more accessible and relevant to all learners; Integration of ICT and Digital Literacy—as Uganda moves toward digital transformation, CBC



Dr. Nyago Bosco

incorporates ICT skills, preparing students for the evolving job market; Continuous Assessment Over Exams—The shift from exam-based evaluation to continuous assessment helps track students' progress in a more holistic way; and Encouraging Lifelong Learning—By focusing on adaptability and problem-solving, CBC prepares students to continue learning beyond school.

Challenges so far encountered

The implementation of Uganda's competency-based curriculum has encountered several challenges but has also achieved notable successes. The challenges include Inadequate Teacher Training: many educators have not received sufficient training to effectively deliver the CBC, leading to difficulties in adopting new teaching methodologies; and

Resource Constraints: schools often lack essential materials and infrastructure to support competency-based learning, hindering effective implementation. Other challenges are Assessment Limitations: traditional assessment methods focusing on rote memorisation are misaligned with the CBC's emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving; and Stakeholder Resistance: some educators and parents exhibit reluctance towards the CBC due to unfamiliarity or scepticism about its effectiveness.

Possible solutions to these challenges

The challenges facing the new curriculum can be addressed through Enhanced Teacher Professional Development: Implement comprehensive training programs to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for CBC delivery; Provision of Adequate Resources: Ensure schools are supplied with the required materials and infrastructure to facilitate competency-based learning; Reform Assessment Strategies: Develop and adopt assessment methods that evaluate students' competencies in critical thinking and problem-solving; and Stakeholder Engagement: Conduct awareness campaigns and workshops to inform and involve all stakeholders in the CBC implementation process.

Success Stories

Teacher Training Initiatives: The government has trained a significant number of teachers to facilitate the CBC, enhancing their ability to deliver the new curriculum effectively.

Positive Student Outcomes: Early reports indicate that students are developing improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills under the CBC. Also, the recently released O Level UNEB examination for the first cohort shows significant improvement in performance.

These developments suggest that, despite challenges, the CBC is making strides in transforming Uganda's education system.

Teachers and CBC

The implementation of Uganda's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) has presented both opportunities and challenges for teachers. While the shift aims to enhance educational outcomes by focusing on practical skills and learner-centred approaches, educators have encountered several obstacles.

These include

1. Insufficient Training: Many teachers feel inadequately prepared to deliver the CBC due to limited training opportunities. The initial government strategy trained 35% of in-service teachers, who were then expected to train their peers through a cascade model. This approach has proven less effective, leaving a significant number of teachers without proper guidance.



Mr. Nyago Bosco conducting a CBC classwork at his workstation.

2. Resource Limitations: The successful implementation of CBC requires adequate teaching materials and infrastructure. However, many schools lack these essential resources, hindering effective curriculum delivery.

3. Assessment Challenges: Transitioning from traditional examination methods to continuous assessment has been difficult. Teachers often struggle with developing and administering assessments that accurately measure competencies.

4. Resistance to Change: Some educators are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and exhibit reluctance toward adopting the new learner-centred approaches mandated by the CBC.

Positive Developments

Despite these challenges, there have been encouraging signs:

- **Enhanced Student Engagement:** Teachers have observed increased student participation and interest in learning activities, attributed to the practical and interactive nature of the CBC.

- **Professional Growth:** The shift to CBC has prompted teachers to pursue further professional development, enhancing their instructional skills and adaptability.

Recommendations:

To support teachers in effectively implementing the CBC, the following measures should be adopted:

- **Comprehensive Training Programs:** Establish ongoing professional development initiatives to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge for CBC delivery.
- **Provision of Adequate Resources:** Ensure that schools are supplied with the required materials and infrastructure to facilitate competency-based learning.
- **Assessment Support:** Develop clear guidelines and tools to assist teachers in creating and implementing effective competency-based assessments.



Minister of Education and Sports Janet Museveni has spearheaded the implementation of the new curriculum

• Change Management Strategies: Implement programs to help teachers transition from traditional methods to the CBC approach, addressing resistance and fostering acceptance.

By addressing these areas, the implementation of the competency-based curriculum in Uganda can be strengthened, leading to improved educational outcomes.

Parents' support

Parents play a crucial role in ensuring their children effectively benefit from the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). Here are key ways they can provide support:

1. Understanding the CBC Approach

- Parents should familiarise themselves with the CBC to understand its goals, methods, and expectations.
- Attend school meetings, workshops, and training sessions on CBC.

2. Encouraging Practical Learning at Home

- Provide opportunities for hands-on learning, such as cooking, gardening, or simple science experiments.
- Encourage creativity through arts, storytelling, and problem-solving activities.

3. Supporting Homework and Assignments

- «Help children with research-based and practical assignments without doing the work for them.
- Provide a conducive environment for study and exploration.

4. Instilling a Positive Attitude Towards Learning

- « Encourage curiosity, critical thinking, and self-directed learning.
- « Praise effort and improvement rather than just focusing on grades

5. Enhancing Communication with Teachers

- Regularly engage with teachers to track the child's progress and address any challenges.
- Seek guidance on how to reinforce learning at home.

6. Providing Necessary Learning Resources

- Equip children with basic materials such as books, internet access, and educational tools.
- If possible, enroll them in extracurricular activities that complement CBC skills..

7. Promoting Social and Life Skills

- Teach children communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills at home.
- Encourage participation in community activities, chores, and leadership opportunities.

8. Encouraging Digital Literacy

- Introduce children to safe and productive use of technology, as CBC integrates ICT in learning.
- Monitor their internet usage to ensure they access appropriate educational content.

9. Being Role Models

- «Demonstrate a love for learning by reading, exploring new skills, and showing curiosity.
- «Encourage discipline, responsibility, and a growth mindset.

10. Advocating for Better CBC Implementation

- Work with schools and policymakers to ensure adequate resources and teacher training for CBC.
- Join parents' associations and participate in discussions about curriculum improvements.

In our next articles we shall explore some ways on how a teacher can leverage on ICT to efficiently and effectively deliver in the Competency-Based Curriculum.

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Factors leading to poor performance in primary schools and the solutions

By: WAISWA MICHAEL BALUYE

Photography: COURTESY



Waiswa Michael Baluye

In January, the Minister of Education and Sports, Janet Kataha Museveni, also the First Lady, released the Primary Seven Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) as prepared by Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB). According to UNEB, the country registered a drop in performance as fewer learners got distinctions. Also captured was the fact that many pupils who join Primary One never complete primary section by writing PLE; many drop off midday before completing primary level. In this article, I present seven challenges that schools, learners, and parents face. I also present seven solutions that can be considered to improve the education sector in Uganda.

PROBLEMS

Increase in School-going Population

As the population of children increases, the demand for teachers and resources also rises.

The current teacher-to-student ratio of 1:165 is unsustainable. Hiring more teachers and improving training can help manage this imbalance.

Teacher Shortages

With only nine teachers for 1500 pupils, there's a clear shortage of staff, which affects the quality of education. Increasing the recruitment of teachers is essential to ensure smaller class sizes and more individualised attention.

Lack of Parental Supervision

In rural areas, many parents don't supervise their children due to socio-economic challenges or lack of education. Community programs that educate parents on the importance of involvement in their children's education could help bridge this gap.

Poor Feeding

Inadequate nutrition can severely affect a child's ability to concentrate and learn. A government-led school feeding program can help improve the health and learning capacity of students. Inadequate Resources When parents cannot afford materials and logistics for their children, it hinders their academic performance. Providing free textbooks and learning materials or subsidising the cost of school supplies can ease this burden.

Teacher Motivation

Low pay and lack of motivation can lead to absenteeism, late arrivals, and disinterest in teaching.

Increasing teacher salaries and offering incentives for performance would encourage more dedicated and punctual educators.

SOLUTIONS

Recruit More Teachers

This will help reduce the teacher-student ratio and provide more individualized attention to students, improving learning outcomes.

Increase Infrastructure

Building more classrooms and avoiding overcrowding or lessons under trees will create a more conducive learning environment.

Enhance Supervision

A stronger system of supervision from the education department will help hold schools and teachers accountable, ensuring quality education.

School Feeding Programs

The government taking over the responsibility for feeding pupils can improve both their health and academic performance.

Increase Teacher Salaries

Competitive wages would not only motivate teachers but also attract more qualified professionals into the sector.

Competent School Management

Ensuring that school management committees are effective and involve stakeholders in decision-making can improve school governance and performance.

Mr. Waiswa Michael Baluye is the ONC Coordinator of Buyende district.

Here are reasons why you should drink a lot of water this dry season

It is that time of the year when most parts of the country are dry with no rains to provide the necessary coolness. The hard hitting hot sun shining through much of the day can be discomforting. It leaves the body hot, dry and in need of moisturizing and nourishing. The excessive dryness becomes evident in your patched skin, dry throats, chapped lips, harsh wind, and withered greenery. The only solution is to stay consistently hydrated and moisturized.

Staying hydrated is a simple yet critical part of maintaining good health. But most people just aren't getting the fluids they need every day. As we age, drinking enough water is even more important.

Drinking enough water daily is important for your overall health. Proper water intake helps your body filter and eliminate waste and toxins through urination, perspiration and bowel movements.

As you navigate through this dry patch of the year, here are some of the reasons why you should keep a bottle of water near you.

Helps maximize physical performance

If you don't stay hydrated, your physical performance can suffer. This is particularly important during high heat. Dehydration can have a noticeable effect if you lose as little as 2% of your body's water content. This can lead to altered



Taking water regularly comes with various health benefits

body temperature control, reduced motivation, and increased fatigue. Optimal hydration has been shown to prevent this from happening.

May help prevent and treat headaches

Dehydration can trigger headaches and migraine in some individuals. Research has shown that a headache is one of the most common symptoms of dehydration. Some studies have shown that drinking water can help relieve headaches. A study in 102 men found that drinking an additional 1.5 liters of water per day resulted in significant improvements on the Migraine-Specific Quality of Life scale, a scoring system for migraine symptoms.

May help relieve constipation

Constipation is a common problem that's characterized by infrequent bowel movements and difficulty

passing stool. Increasing fluid intake is often recommended as a part of the treatment protocol, and there's some evidence to back this up. Low water consumption appears to be a risk factor for constipation in both younger and older individuals. Increasing hydration may help decrease constipation. Studies have shown that mineral water that's rich in magnesium and sodium improves bowel movement frequency and consistency in people with constipation.

May help treat kidney stones

Urinary stones are painful clumps of mineral crystal that form in the urinary system. The most common form is kidney stones, which form in the kidneys. Higher fluid intake increases the volume of urine passing through the kidneys. This dilutes the concentration of minerals, so they're less likely to crystallize and form clumps.

Water may also help prevent the initial formation of stones, but studies are required to confirm this. Water also helps flush harmful bacteria from your bladder and can aid in preventing urinary tract infections (UTIs).

Affects energy levels, brain function

Your brain is strongly influenced by your hydration status. Studies show that even mild dehydration, such as the loss of 1–3% of body weight, can impair many aspects of brain function.

Many other studies, with subjects ranging from children to older adults, have shown that mild dehydration can impair mood, memory, and brain performance. Dehydration can slow down circulation and affect the flow of oxygen to your brain.

A lack of fluids can also cause your heart to work harder to pump oxygen all throughout your body. All of that expended energy can make you feel tired, sluggish, and less focused. When you stay hydrated by drinking more water, you'll prevent dehydration and have more pep to get you through the day.

Even mild dehydration—as little as 2% fluid loss—can affect memory, mood, concentration, and reaction time. Adding just a few glasses of water to your daily intake can have a positive effect on cognition, stabilize your emotions, and even combat feelings of anxiety.

Can aid weight loss; control calories

Drinking plenty of water can help you lose weight. This is because water can increase satiety and boost your metabolic rate.



Some evidence suggests that increasing water intake can promote weight loss by slightly increasing your metabolism, which can increase the number of calories you burn on a daily basis. A 2013 study in 50 young women with overweight demonstrated that drinking an additional 500ml of water 3 times per day before meals for 8 weeks led to significant reductions in body weight and body fat compared with their pre-study measurements. The timing is important too. Drinking water half an hour before meals is the most effective. It can make you feel more full so that you eat fewer calories. Food with high water content tends to look larger, its higher volume requires more chewing, and it is absorbed more slowly by the body, which helps you feel full. Water-rich foods include fruits, vegetables, broth-based soups, oatmeal, and beans.

Helps balance of body fluids

Your body is composed of about 80% water. The functions of these bodily fluids include digestion, absorption, circulation, creation of saliva, transportation of nutrients, and maintenance of body temperature.

Through the posterior pituitary gland, your brain communicates with your kidneys and tells it how much water to excrete as urine or hold onto for reserves. When you're low on fluids, the brain triggers the body's thirst mechanism. And unless you are taking medications that make you thirsty, you should listen to those cues and get yourself a drink of water, juice, milk, coffee but not alcohol. Alcohol interferes with the brain and kidney communication and causes excess excretion of fluids which can then lead to dehydration.

Digestive harmony

Your body needs water in order to digest food properly. Without enough, you may experience irregular bowel movements, gas, bloating, heartburn, and other discomforts that can hurt your quality of life.

When you make it a point to stay hydrated, it can help get things moving in the right direction again. Water aids in breaking down soluble fiber from your diet to keep your digestion process on track.

Mineral water is especially beneficial—look for products enriched with sodium and magnesium.

Better temperature regulation

Research shows that when you're dehydrated, your body stores more heat. This in turn lowers your ability to tolerate hot temperatures.

Hydrating with plenty of water helps you produce sweat when you're overheated during activity, which in turn cools your body down.

This built-in cooling mechanism is critical in preventing heat stroke and other potentially deadly heat-related conditions.

Steven Malagala Exclusive

“It is a good feeling that people are now appreciating Lusoga music.”

If you have been around the music industry in Busoga, you probably know the name *Steven Malagala* and have definitely encountered his songs. He is someone rarely omitted at important musical events in Busoga. You can say he is a legend.

In this exclusive interview, Malagala, who is also the Local Council Three chairperson for Irundu Sub County in Buyende district, sat down with *Busoga Times* editor *Baz Waiswa* to talk about his musical journey, music in Busoga, and his upcoming concert on 1st March 2025 at Lufula Grounds, Irundu Town Council.

How did you first get into music, and what inspired you to pursue music as a career?

I started this music journey from when I was still in school, around primary five and six and above. I used to play almost all musical instruments, like the drums and the xylophone (*embaire*), and dance. I used to admire the guitar, but I had no access to it. I used to travel on foot from Bugodha to go for prayers at Fr. Wynad's church in Kamuli because they had a guitar. But even there, I had no access to it. But I would get an adrenaline rush whenever I saw people playing the guitar. This was during the late 1980s.

After my senior four, I went to Luwero to start working. One time, while I was working as a tax collector, I saw a man, who was called called of Kyevunze village, conducting guitar lessons. He taught me how to play the guitar. He also taught me how to compose, write, and arrange music. At the time, Fred Ssebata was the trending musician.



Steven Malagala is a musician, politician, farmer, businessman, and mentor.

From there, I returned to Busoga and bought a guitar, and my music journey started. I started singing and performing; that is how I released my first tape (album) in May 1998. The title of the album was *ebizibu ebyensi*. I followed it up with *ensi elikuwaba*, *omuze ogwobusenguze*, *ebya dilu*, *ekikwekabya*, and many others until I released the album that has my most famous song called *ebintu bisingagana*, commonly known as *buutu*, in 2006.



Malagala has had a lasting music partnership with his wife Fida.

And here we are today. I recently released a song in which I report to Kyabazinga how morals and cultural values in Busoga are decaying. We have children getting married as early as 14 years, cutting down trees like mangoes, oranges, etc. My latest song is *Kyenabwoine ewa Neyimba*, which I am launching at my concert on 1st March 2025 at Irundu Town Council, Buyende district.

I am happy that people have now started appreciating Lusoga music. When I started music, people did not support music from Busoga. I am the first Musoga musician to stage a concert in Busoga (*ebivela*); it used to be *Kadongo Kamu* artists from Buganda. This has changed. Today we have many Basoga artists. I have personally mentored many musicians in Busoga, including Abadongole (Hoe & Yazo), Fida Malagala, Aisha Bisambi Biteleka, and many others. Today, I get calls from musicians saying I inspired them.

Who were your biggest musical influences growing up, and which musicians have had the biggest influence on your style?

At the time, we had Fred Ssebata and Paul Kafeero, and those were my favourites. But we also had Dan Mugula and Matia Kakumirizi. But when I was in Luwero, I got to appreciate Herman Basudde's music. In Busoga, I was inspired by Moses Nabuti, now deceased. He later came to love my music.

What do you consider your strongest musical skill?

What I know about myself is that I am a good creator and composer. I believe there is no one as good as me in Busoga when it comes to composing music. When it comes to instruments, I play the rhythm guitar, and I am so good at it. I am also a great writer of music. I am a good composer and writer of music.

How do your personal experiences influence your music?

The person who taught me how to compose and write music emphasised two life topics—family and life challenges; these are always with us in life. That is why my songs are topical and everlasting. What qualities do you look for in a person you are going to collaborate with? Sometimes it is his or her vocal abilities, sometimes it is his or her stage presence, or his or her words that can make a good composition for people to enjoy.

How has collaboration shaped your music?

I haven't collaborated with very many people. I am usually collaborating with my wife, Fida. But I have collaborated with Willy Mukabya, the Kadogo Kamu singer. But I have planned collaborations with Kadabada and Uncle Hoe. Other artists are approaching me, and we haven't concluded.

How do you balance your personal life, politics, and your music career?

Politics is usually during the daytime. And you get to know government programs in advance so you can plan accordingly. However, some political programs are abrupt, which tends to interfere with my music appointments. What helps is that music is in the night. You can do the politics work during the day and rush to catch up with the music at night.

What are your thoughts on the current music industry landscape in Busoga?

It has been moving well. Many people are singing in Lusoga. Today, you can go to a function, and all the music playing is from Busoga. However, we still have a challenge with radio stations. I don't know if presenters don't enjoy Lusoga songs. A Musoga presenter can be on a program for hours but doesn't play a Lusoga song, even when listeners request Lusoga songs.

Can you tell us about a song you've written that holds a special meaning for you?

Music is strange. It is like fathering children. You love them all, but you also notice their different good or bad attributes. My favourite song may not be the favourite for many of my fans. I never thought that Buutu would be a hit song; the song on that album that I thought would be a hit was *Nderuka Lwa Sente*. But the favourite of my songs is called Otadhelega Mirimu. It came out on the *Ekikwekabya* album; however, people loved the song *Ekikwekabya*.

What are some of the challenges of the music business, and how do you navigate them?

People despise us so much, especially at places where we go to perform. People underrate us. They think we are nobodies. But things are changing. The other thing is that people never prioritise music and entertainment in their budgeting. We are the last on their budget list. For example, someone cannot come to a concert before taking their children back to school.

That is why I feel bad when singers disrespect people who have come to concerts to support us. Some of the people who come to our concerts are richer, more respected, and sacrifice a lot to come to our shows.

What changes would you like to see in the music industry?

The change I want among musicians in Busoga is to bring an end to bickering. We need to understand that we are brothers who should start working together. We shouldn't celebrate when our brothers and sisters get challenges. We should cut down on words and walk together in the line of music.

What advice would you give to emerging artists?

I also implore young musicians to respect their elders in the industry. They should understand that we cleared the path that they are walking in today. Even if we have not given them anything, they should appreciate that we have brought Lusoga music from down to what it is today that they are enjoying.

How has the digital era influenced your music?

Everything has an advantage and a disadvantage. Before the computers came, when recording a song, there was no room for error. An error even when at the end of the song, it meant redoing the song. Today, you only cut out where the mistake is—you basically edit the recording. So, recording music is easier in this digital age.

However today, when you release a song, before you even reach home, the song is already in London. Before you make any money off it, the boys who distribute to people's memory cards are eating money off your sweat. While you are waiting for a concert to make some money, the music distributor is eating money.



Steven Malagala is a music icon in Busoga

What projects are you currently working on? First of all, I am a farmer. I have some heads of cattle, a poultry project, and a fruit farm. So, when I am not on the stage, I am able to survive. On the side of music, I have a launch concert titled *Kyinabwoine Ewa Neyiba; Teweuma Katonda*. On 28th April, we are in Buwologoma in Luuka district and then come to Irundu Town Council on 1st March 2025. What should people coming to the concert launch expect? They should expect the best from Steven Malagala and other artists who are escorting me. Musicians like Kibijigiri, Uncle Hoe, Willy Mukabya, Kadabada, Mr. Yazo, Brother Rooney, Fida Malagala, Gumba Nkanika Bugali, Namulondo, Munabai, and many others.

CHAIRMAN
STEVEN MALAGALA



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Busoga Cycling Championships fostering unity and cultural pride

By: MUSA KIKUUNO

Photography: INTERNET/SABULA SPORT



The Kyabazinga launched the second edition of the MTN Busoga Cycling Championships

The second edition of the MTN Busoga Cycling Championships, also known as “Obugaali Bwa Amasaza Ga Busoga,” was launched on Friday, January 10, 2025, by His Majesty William Wilberforce Kadumbula Gabula Nadiope IV, the Kyabazinga, at the Busoga Kingdom Headquarters in Bugembe, Jinja City. The competition, originally slated for 2024, was delayed and took place under the banner of the 2024 edition.

The kingdom Minister for Sports, Owek. Amin Bbosa Nkono, speaking at the Championship launch, said the purpose of the Championship is to foster unity, cultural pride, and regional sports development.

The cycling championship attracted participants from all 11 counties of Busoga—Bugabula BB, Kigulu, Luuka, Butembe, Bukooli, Bunha, Busiki, Bulamogi, Bukono, Bunhole-Bunanumba, and Bugweri.

“The main goal of this championship is to unite the people of Busoga through the sport of cycling while showcasing our local talent. We expect each of the 11 counties to field their best cyclists for what promises to be an exciting competition,” Owek. Nkono said.

Kyabazinga’s vision

At the launch, the Kyabazinga

thrilled his subjects with exquisite cycling skills as he set the bicycle race in motion.

The Kyabazinga emphasised the importance of sports in fostering unity and development among his people. His participation in the launch was a symbol of his commitment to inspiring the youth and promoting cultural pride through Obugaali bwa Amasaza ga Busoga.

The first edition

The MTN Busoga Cycling Championship began in 2022. Bukooli won the Tippa category while Butembe reigned supreme in the Mountain Sport Bike category.

www.busogatimes.com

This year, participants competed in two categories, that is, the Tippa (Gaali Ensoga) and the Mountain Bikes, with each chiefdom sending four cyclists to the grand finale, two from each category.

The 2022 race featured a gruelling 188-kilometre route that stretched from the Kyabazinga's headquarters in Bugembe, through various towns including Jinja, Iganga, Kaliro, Namwendwa, Kamuli, Buwenge, and back to Bugembe.

The grand finale

After the preliminary performances at county level, the stage was for an exciting showdown as the best cyclists from across Busoga prepared to compete in the grand finale on February 15, 2025.

With 44 top riders qualifying through gruelling preliminary races, all eyes were on the two categories: the Tippa Bike (Maanhi Ga Kifuuba) and Mountain Sports Bike.

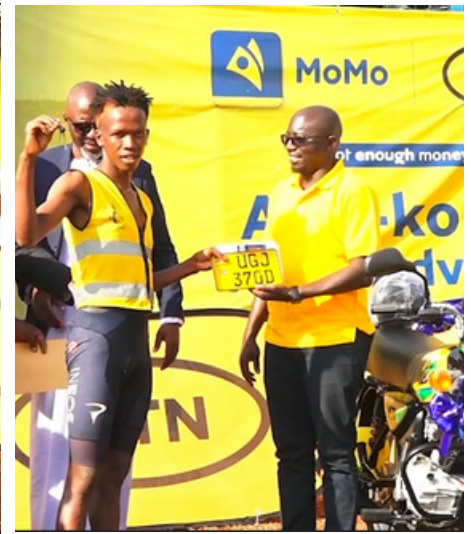
The stakes were high, as the competition promised thrilling action and prestigious rewards, including brand-new motorcycles for the winners.

The journey to the final has been nothing short of exhilarating.

The preliminary races took place from January 18 to February 2, 2025, across various chiefdoms in Busoga, with riders battling for their spot in the finale.

The grand finale has been a 188 km race, with cyclists facing a demanding course that tested their endurance and skill.

All 44 finalists were guaranteed a UGX 50,000 reward from MTN Uganda, the event's main sponsor, but the real prizes await the top finishers.



Luganda Tiffu of Bukooli and Odoto John of Kigulu won motorcycles and cash prizes for emerging winners in their categories.



Bukooli, Kigulu winners

The MTN Busoga Cycling Championship 2024 culminated in a thrilling and historic grand finale of 175 km on Saturday, February 15, 2025. Luganda Tiffu, riding for Bukooli Chiefdom, and Odoto John, riding for Kigulu, emerged victorious in the Tippa category and Mountain Sports Bike category, respectively.

Each winner went home with a new motorcycle (CT 125 HD) along with a cash prize of UGX2 million. Tiffu was followed by Farmer Shafik from Butembe, and Mugoda Dominic from Bunha secured

secured second and third places, respectively, each taking home significant cash prizes of UGX 1 million and UGX 500,000. Odoto, who made history by being the first rider to win the championship category with two different counties (Butembe in 2022 and now Kigulu in 2024), was followed by Magemeso Mensuramu from Luuka and Byansi Rogers from Bugabula; they secured second and third place, earning UGX 1 million and UGX 500,000, respectively.

ENG. MOSES MAGOGO

Postponing CHAN 2024 gives us time to mobilize Ugandans to benefit from tournament

By: BAZ WAISWA

Photography: COURTESY



Moses Hassim Magogo, FUFA President

To many football fans in Uganda and East Africa at large, the postponement of CHAN 2024 from February 2025 to August 2025 was heartbreaking. In this interview, *Eng. Moses Hashim Magogo*, the President of the Federation of Uganda Football Associations (FUFA), explains why the postponement should be received in good faith and with positivity. Below are the excerpts from an exclusive interview the FUFA boss had with *Baz Waiswa*, the editor of *Busoga Times*. Read on.

The CAF President, Dr. Patrice Motsepe, seems like a nice guy and a mutual friend to you; when he was here in December to assess the

readiness of Uganda, he said he was 'proud of the excellent work Uganda has put in to prepare for CHAN 2024'; what didn't he say at the time seeing that CAF has postponed the tournament because of insufficient infrastructure?

There has been massive investment and interest by Uganda for CHAN 2024 and AFCON 2027. For example, Mandela National Stadium, which is the main venue and only competition venue for CHAN 2024, is ready, while the other venues for AFCON 2027, thus Hoima and Aki Bua, are under construction and ahead of schedule. So, this qualifies the statement by President Motsepe.

The success of competitions and events of this magnitude largely depends on

three parameters: the infrastructure, the event, and the sporting performance of the home team. Whereas the main venue was ready, there were bits of works tidying up on training venues. I think the extension by six months will benefit Uganda to prepare a great event than would have been in February.

The opportunity to host CHAN was not given to Uganda and partner states Kenya and Tanzania yesterday—the time to prepare and put the required infrastructure in place to host the tournament has been there and enough; what exactly has been the challenge that saw the three East African's biggest economies come short of CAF requirements?

Normally, competitions of this magnitude require lots of time. Cameroon, which hosted AFCON 2021, was given the rights in 2014, and Ivory Coast 2023 in 2014. East Africa-Pamoja was awarded the hosting rights for AFCON 2027 in September 2023, and the hosting rights for CHAN were awarded in September 2024 with just 5 months to the competition.

Everything is moving according to plan for AFCON 2027, and indeed, CHAN 2024 in August is only making us even more ready for AFCON 2027. The challenge is time, not the economies.



The CAF President led a delegation to assess the readiness of Namboole stadium in December 2024.

Someone or something has to be accountable for this shortfall; who should we blame for this failing?

Do we always have to have someone to blame? Everyone is working very hard to ensure that East Africa hosts Africa and the world for the first time. From the sports side, the entertainment side, and the business side, Ugandans were looking out for this tournament, which was coming to the country for the first time; as someone who understands the cycle of football business, how has Uganda been affected by the postponement of this tournament? I can confidently say that Uganda will benefit more from the postponement instead of the presumed losses, as we had not sold the event to the people due to concentration on the infrastructure. Now we have the time to mobilise the country for the event.

It can't all be gloom; individuals who have been affected by the postponement are counting their losses and re-strategising. Has the postponement presented any newer advantages and opportunities for the hosting countries?

The first 5 questions are coming from a pessimistic and negative mind. Let us be positive. The success of this event needs us all. The new advantages are that more Ugandans are going to be recruited to be part of the event, which was not going to be the case in February. More information is going to be provided for followers, tourists, fans, businesspersons, etc. It is time to sell Uganda to the world.

On the sporting side, the Uganda Cranes coach was raring to go; if his team's preparations strategy during the qualifier game against Burundi is anything to go by, how have the Uganda Cranes been affected by this postponement?

The preparations were in top gear on the side of the team but will get even better preparations with the extended time. It is up to the players in the league to continue to compete to be part of this worldwide platform.

Now that CAF has rescheduled the continental tournament to August this year, a few months before the Morocco AFCON 2025 in December, as a host federation, how are you responding to this postponement administratively, logistically, and sport-wise?

It is going to be tough, but FUFA has the means to handle these schedules. In 2024 we had 41 international matches, including six AFCON 2025 qualifiers in just 90 days. Logistically, we have what it takes. Our engagement with government has been to provide the funding in full and in time so that we are able to plan accordingly. The latest I heard is that the government has responded to this call.

The 2025/6 UPL season may be affected by starting in October and also with many breaks, meaning matches may be played back-to-back, which affects players and clubs that have no depth of squads. We will engage the UPL and clubs and see how we can mitigate this challenge.

Uganda Cranes returned to AFCON triumphantly and will be going to Morocco, quite an achievement for the federation and country. What is FUFA's strategy and priorities ahead of the tournament?

We are in the process of rebuilding a formidable side that will be the pride of Uganda in the next ten years and more. The generation that took us to AFCON 2017 and 2019 after almost

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40 years had to retire, and rebuilding a new generation is not easy, but AFCON 2025 Qualifiers have shown that our plans for youth, national, and international competitions will generate new stars. The FUFA Technical Master Plan is the in-depth long-term solution for greater heights in club and national football on the continent. For AFCON 2025, the objective is to add more experience at that level to the young players so that by AFCON 2027 we have a competing team. For AFCON 2025, we will motivate and prepare the team very well.

What do Uganda's AFCON qualification and hosting of CHAN and AFCON 2027 say about football development, progress, growth, and sports challenges in the country presently?

Football in Uganda has had challenges over the decades. There are those we can solve as football people and those beyond us. For example, the lack of proper governance setups at FUFA and the members, the business understanding and practicing, and the sport on the field are the ones we are dealing with, as football and some substantial results have been registered, although we still have a lot to do. However, what AFCON and CHAN present is an opportunity to mobilise the government to invest in sports infrastructure and to pick interest to understand how football and sports generally are a form of economic activity for the youth and the biggest promoter of patriotism and international awareness of our country.

The federation will conduct elections to vote for a new president. You have indicated you will run to retain the job, but sections of stakeholders in local football say you play tricks



The national football teams will have a busy year playing in CHAN and AFCON 2025.

t and alter the constitution to lock them out; even now, some say the elections will not be free and fair. Please clarify what really happens.

This question is based on non-factual background, therefore it will require a huge discussion of its own, and also, in order to protect the readers from “doping,” I would prefer that we restrict ourselves to CHAN and AFCON and how these can shape the sporting landscape in Uganda. If you get another moment, I am glad to discuss the football politics and elections.

And lastly, please paint a picture of what the year 2025 will be like for football in Uganda.

2025 is going to be a rollercoaster of events: CHAN, AFCON, AFCON U17, AFCON (Women), National Competitions, Training of Human Resources, and [FUFA] elections, but we have built the institution of FUFA to carry all these.



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