

THE RUBIRIZI DISTRICT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026-2031

THE YOUTH EXPLOITING THE LOCAL
OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER FUTURE



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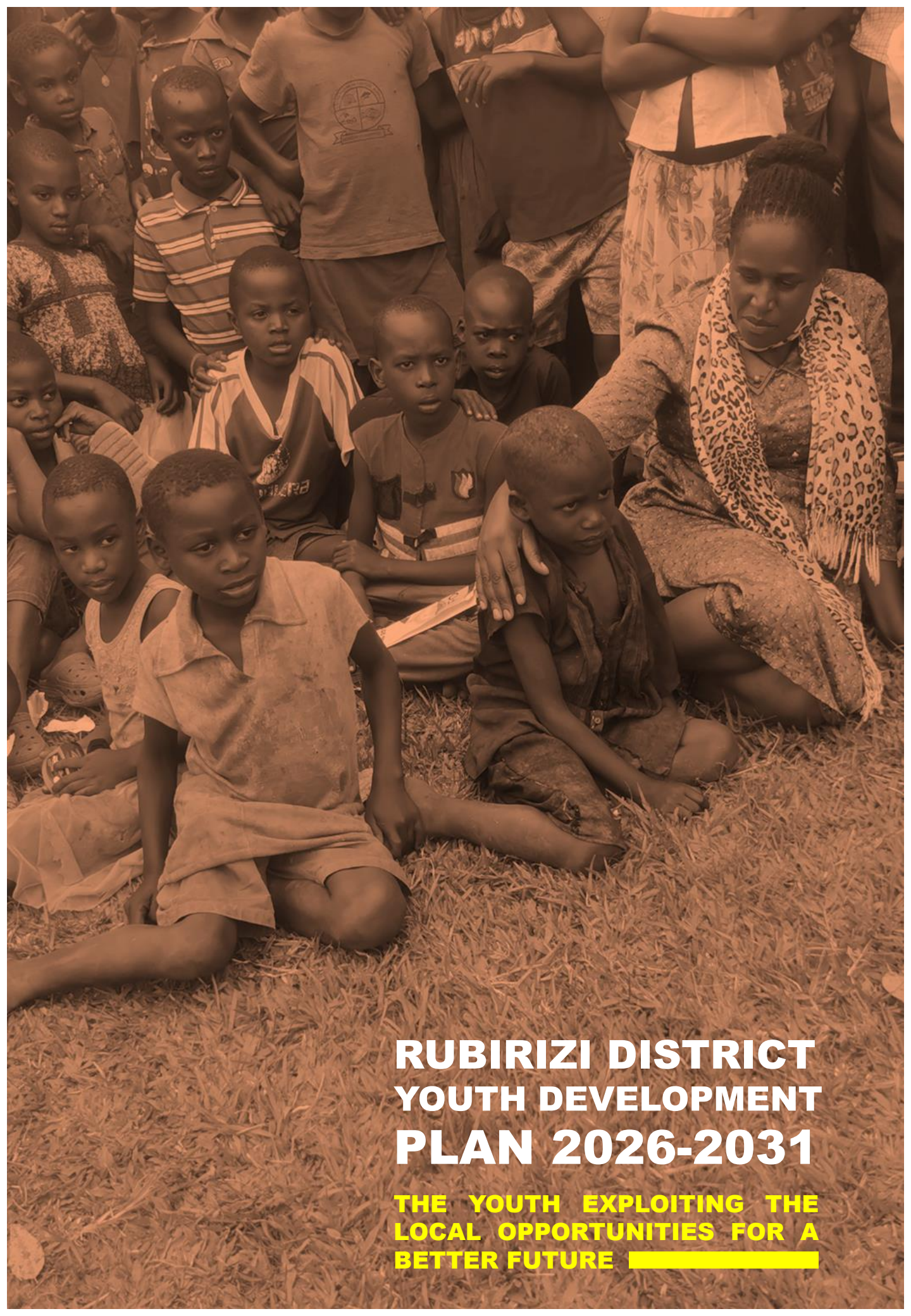
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A sepia-toned photograph of a group of children and a woman sitting on the ground in a rural setting. The children are of various ages, some looking directly at the camera, others looking down or to the side. A woman is sitting on the right, looking down at a child. The ground is covered in dry grass or straw.

RUBIRIZI DISTRICT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026-2031

**THE YOUTH EXPLOITING THE
LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A
BETTER FUTURE**



QUEEN AYEBARE RESTYTUTA

At only 22 years, Queen TUTA blessed Rubirizi District with a prestigious crown of Miss Tourism Ankole 2023-2024. This mark of honor portrayed the resilience of the community of Rubirizi to reshape from over-simplified stereotypes that for long had been conditioned against Rubirizi District by the rest region peers in pursuit of identification and co-existence.

PREFACE

Every development initiative deserves a structured, consciously laid down and time bound road-map and that is what this plan is meant for.

If it can be accepted by leaders, policy makers, planners, civil society and NGOs plus all youth-based and intended efforts but most especially the young people themselves, then we would be sure that there is a guide for accountability.

Local Governments are so much lacking with development frameworks while their capacity to interpret the national manifestos and policy efforts also remains insufficient and are not utilizing the national development principles by breaking them down into their local concepts – and so there is that policy gap.

The youth in Rubirizi are waking up to realizing the immense opportunities in the district and sharpening to exploiting them to better their lives, however, unregulated and uncoordinated development efforts especially when you are dealing with natural advantages, a lot can go waste and therefore, this youth development plan of 2026-2031 intends to inspire all developmental spheres such as tourism, agriculture, etc to come up with specific departmental guidelines. Hoping this guides us to take this direction.



**BY FREDRICK BEINOMUGISHA
LUMEN CONSULTING LIMITED**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

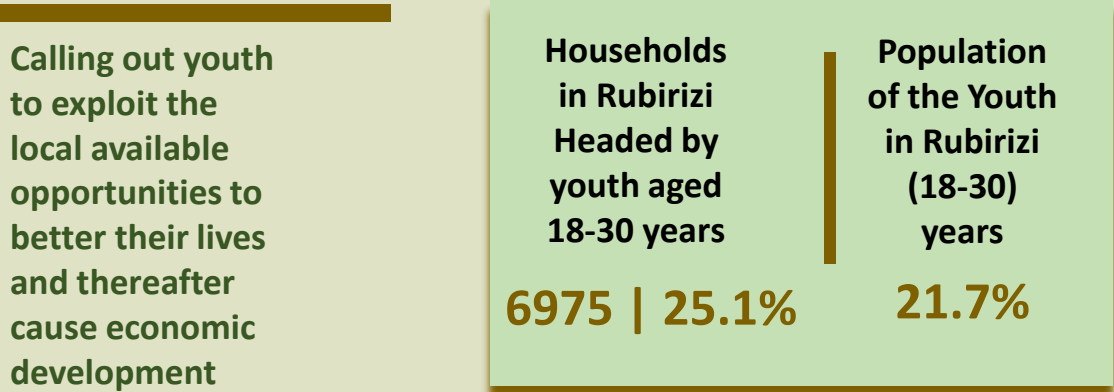
The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 which grows its inspiration from The **2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto**, provides for an exhaustive and inclusive strategic framework specifically intentioned to harness the potential of the young people in Rubirizi District and call them out **to exploit the available local opportunities to better their lives** and thereafter cause community development. And the hope is that this plan is acceptable, feasible and achievable that it will be anchored in every youth’s commitment and the district’s to promoting youth development, empowerment and participation in socio-economic activities.

1.1 Background

In Uganda, young people aged 18-30 years (Youth) account for about 22.7% of the population (as per the 2024 Census preliminary results), yet they face significant challenges in accessing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2020), youth unemployment rates stand at 13.3%, with many more underemployed or engaged in informal sector activities. This untapped potential of young entrepreneurs can be a significant driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation if there was a well-intentioned roadmap to guide the aspirations of young people into meaningful participation and access to community decision-making avenues with a well-defined framework for their development priorities.

These figures portray Uganda as a youthful nation with about 50% of its total population being below 18 years and over 78% being under 35 years.

This status therefore, reechoes the significance of youth-based and well-intentioned policies and the urgent need to address the common challenges specifically affecting youth to make impactful strides towards their own development.



Rubirizi district consists of 2 Constituencies of Katerera and Bunyaruguru, 9 Sub Counties, 2 town councils, and 293 villages with a total population of about 132,000 people.

58.1% of these people in Rubirizi District are young people 17 years and below with those between 18-30 years about 21.7% of the population in the district. Similarly, it is a majority youthful population and in such a rural society very favorable for agriculture, naturally endowed and self proclaiming **“Pearl of Uganda”** – *iwunde!* A youthful population should provide a more advantage of energetic labor-force to amplify on these opportunities for more economical relevance.

About 400 youths of age between 18-30 years are not working and not in school and these account to about 1.5% of the total district population. And these young people probably already have family responsibilities.

And The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan aims at calling out to these youth to exploit the available local opportunities in the District to better their own lives and thereafter drive economic development. The president, Mr. Museveni calls it the money economy – where an individual (youth) at least has a product in the market, or / and with at least a skill ready to earn a living.

The development plan also aims at developing a roadmap for youth development in the district with close alignment to the national policies and strategies such National Development Plan (NDP), Uganda Vision 2040, and the SDGs at the global level..

While formal-schools education has become a crucial priority in Rubirizi District, there is still a great deal of young people who dropped out of school or, even those who never got a chance to step in school and they have been trapped outside of the community’s attention – these young people need out-of-formal-schools solutions.



1.2 The Case:

That it is now true that the youth are a critical demographic in Rubirizi District, representing a significant proportion and investing in their development is very important for the socio-economic transformation of the individual youth, the district and country at large.

In this plan, every young person is therefore called out to exploit the unique local advantages to better their lives. And also provides for a roadmap for youth development, focusing on areas of tourism development and environment conservation, skills development through vocational education training, agriculture and value addition and civic engagement amongst others.

1.3 The Youth Situation Analysis:

Amongst the Commonwealth counters, the average improvement in youth development was 2.6% over the 12-year period from 2010 to 2022, with more than two-thirds of Commonwealth countries remaining in the low and medium categories of youth development. And the Youth Development Index (YDI) assesses six domains of youth development, which are: Education, Employment and Opportunity, Equality and Inclusion, Health and Wellbeing, Peace and Security and Political and Civil Participation.

The 2023 Youth Development Index report highlights that Sub-Saharan Africa recorded the largest improvement in its average youth development levels, at 3.81%. Singapore had the highest level of youth development in the 2023 YDI, followed by Denmark, Portugal, Iceland and Slovenia. In contrast , Afghanistan had the lowest level of youth development, followed by the Central African Republic, Niger, Chad and Somalia.

Regarding the specific situation of youth in Rubirizi District, there is limited data available. However, it is known that the youth in Rubirizi face the challenge of ineffective participation in politics, with many of them continuing to be used by senior politicians for selfish interests. Additionally, youth-based businesses in the district often struggle to survive and there is need for more opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation.

It is the intention of this Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 to emphasize the importance of promoting youth development and empowering them to contribute to the development of the district. Therefore, focusing on inclusive and sustainable development, this plan provides insights and recommendations that policy makers, and all stakeholders can expound on to create a more supportive environment for youth development in Rubirizi district.

While there has been some strides in youth participation in politics, majority youth participation is still ineffective with more youth people used and dumped by senior politicians

In 10 youth, 8 support politicians for specific promises & only 1 gets fulfilled

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The **Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031** was carefully developed through a well executed process that was guided by a comprehensive, participatory and inclusive approach and this process ensured that participants got actively involved with a thorough understanding of the need for the engagement.

The participants of this development process included different stakeholders, particularly youth from Rubirizi District.

This methodology provides a comprehensive overview of the steps that were taken to develop the plan from the initial stage of stakeholder engagement and data collection to the plan development and validation stages.

The methodological approach was designed with assurance that it would comprehensively capture the diverse perspectives and experiences of the Rubirizi District youth, while ensuring that the final plan is evidence-based, responsive to the needs of the youth and aligned with the District –level priorities and **The 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto.**

Through this methodology, The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan aims to call out the youth of Rubirizi to exploit the local available opportunities in a naturally gifted land to better their lives and also to provide a roadmap for promoting youth development and empowerment in the District, contributing to the achievement of the district’s overall development goals.

Stakeholder Engagement

Key stakeholders were identified and they included the district youth leaders, the youth in business, young professionals, CSOs, and the students. Their strategic insights and input in the development plan were gathered .

Data Collection

Existing reports from the district youth council and other district-level reports on youth issues were reviewed and aligned against The National Youth Manifesto 2026-2031 to gain a deeper national understanding of youth issues.

Plan Development

The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan was comprehensively developed through a participatory and inclusive process based on findings and priorities identified during the stakeholder engagement and data collection exercises.

Surveys

were conducted to gather quantitative responses from the participants

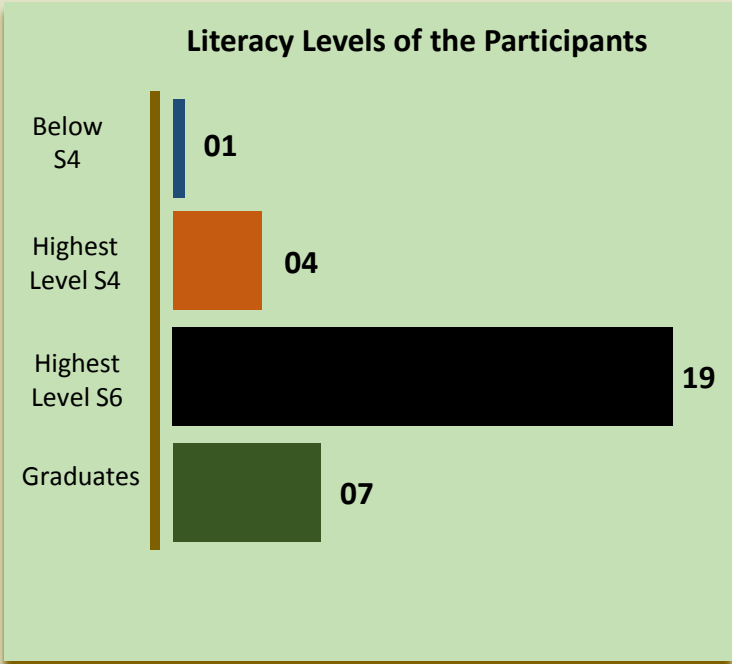
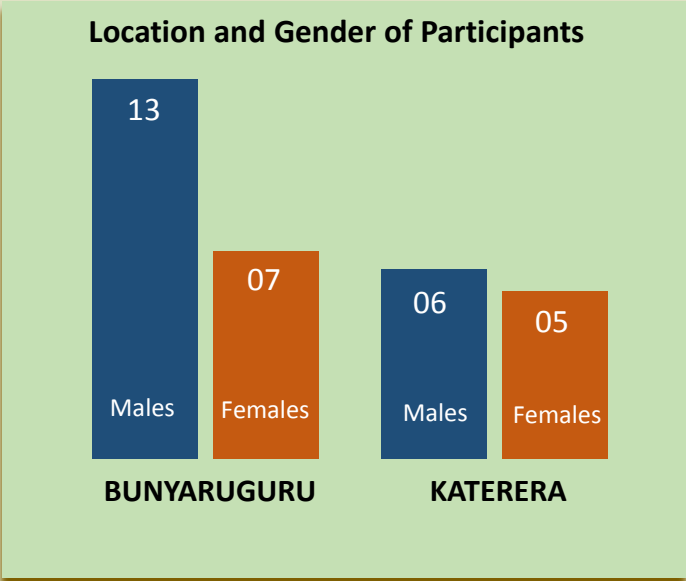
Focus Group

Discussions with some youth groups & other stakeholders were conducted to collect qualitative data

3.0 DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

3.1 Location and Gender

The engagements and data collection processes in Rubirizi District for the development of the Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 through both the surveys and focus group discussions had a total of 31 participants from both the counties of Bunyaruguru and Katerera carefully balancing between males and females. 11 participants came from Katerera while 20 came from Bunyaruguru as shown in the chart.



3.2 Education

61.2% of the participants in the development process of the Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 had senior six as their highest level of education, 22.5% were graduates, 12.9 had senior four as their highest and then 3.2% were below senior four as their literacy status

61.29% of the participants were males and 38.70% female

64.51% of the participants were from Bunyaruguru county and 35.48% from Katerera

4.0 WINS OF THE YOUTH 2021-2026

The youth in Rubirizi for this period of 2021-2026 have had some significant strides in the general aspects of community growth and development. Rubirizi district continues to realize the fruits of education and then community sensitization with more avenues of civic engagement and therefore, slowly outgrowing from the longstanding primitive tendencies that had continued to hold the society behind.

These strides of community growth and development have been noted in the following ways:

4.1 Politics and Youth Participation

The youth in Rubirizi have continued to stand up boldly to participate in elective politics for this period of 2021-2026. Previously, active politics had been a reserve for prestigious individuals who after their successful careers sought prestigious heightening and respect in the community through leadership. Therefore, you had to either be at your career prime and around your 50s nearing retirement or from the prestigious “big name” families. And that is for the main reason there had been stagnant code names of politicians for nearly more decades.



- Agaba Obed Byakureka (30 years) surprise victory as Chairperson LC5 NRM party flag bearer 2026-2031 against two-terms incumbent.
- More young people (Fredrick Beinomugisha, Agaba Obed and Fred Bagambe) contesting in the Chairperson LC5 race of the NRM party primaries, a position which had for long been considered as a reserve for the older age
- Hon. Cadet Benjamin elected as MP Bunyaruguru and Hon. Nalongo Jeniva as Woman MP NRM party primary elections, both young leaders.

But this time there is likely going to be a very young district Chairperson after Mr. Byakureka Obed at 30 years surprisingly defeated the two terms incumbent Chairman Agubanshongorera in the NRM party primaries awaiting the general election – that is a very serious win for the youth.

With the District Chairperson seat, it was totally interesting having in the race three (30 years old) young men challenging the old reeks of political beliefs that this specific seat was a reserve for the older class. And Fredrick Beinomugisha, one of those young contenders in that race was quoted during his campaign in the NRM primaries saying that his candidature was specifically intentional to challenge the old beliefs that some positions are a demarcation and reserve for certain class and age disaggregations.

Still on the wins for the youth in politics and youth participation, Honorable Cadet, who after having got a rare chance into politics at a very youthful age in 2011 on his election into Parliament representing Bunyaruguru County and on failing to defend the seat against Honorable John Twesigye Ntamuhiira after only one term in 2016, it had portrayed a poor picture to trust young people with leadership but, fortunately Cadet also managed to win back another chance from a very convincing victory against the same political rival in the recent NRM primary elections – this was another win for the young people.

Honorable Nalong Arinaitwe Jeniva, at 35 years, and on her first attempt in politics defeated a two term strong lady Grace Kesande Bataringaya, who despite the odds, had been very difficult to defeat by a two times rival (Judith Amanywa) following her (Hon. Kesande) vigorous campaigns of financial literacy (akabokisi) among the local people.

And for the first time, Rubirizi got a candidate contesting in youth parliamentary elections. Julian Amanywa is a daughter to Mzee Pasiente and she was contesting in the Western youth Member of Parliament race in the NRM party primary elections.

4.2 Miss Tourism Ankole

It was another major win for Rubirizi youth and the community at large when a young lady from Rubirizi (Queen Ayebare Restytuta) emerged the victor in the Miss Tourism Ankole competitions.

And for the first time we witnessed a very united, committed and positive community getting together behind Queen Ayebare Restytuta to massively support and elect her as Miss Popularity and later on witness her crowning as Miss Tourism Ankole for year 2023.



4.3 Ankole Districts Football Tournament

Rubirizi District football team registered massive victory in 2024 with its participation in the Ankole Districts football cup when they won the trophy for the 2024 tournament. It is in the

cases it was unbelievable that they would sit together on a same platform and also cheer to the team besides each other. This therefore fostered unity and togetherness.

same competition that a young man of Rubirizi, Taremwa also emerged as the top scorer of that same year's tournament. It was a very marvelous win for the youth and the community of Rubirizi and all appreciation goes to Honorable Nalongo Arinaitwe Jeniva and his husband Byamukama Innocent who were the chief sponsors of the District team.

This event of the competition managed to bring together different dignitaries who in some



4.4 Resilience for Economic Development

The youth in Rubirizi continue to stand strong and fight poverty by utilizing the local opportunities as it is the main intention for this development plan. To encourage youth to exploit the local advantages and foster sustainable livelihoods.

And young people are coming out boldly with particular example of **Meryna Enterprises – Eat and Drink Fresh.** This is an economical initiative of Mercy Lydia Natukunda who is utilizing the Ripple Effect Program implemented by Rural Initiative for Poverty Alleviation (RIPA) and she is telling a



success story that is inspiring fellow young people to also stand out tall.

Other youth are also showing up resiliently especially in tourism and conservation where young people are realizing the natural beauty of Rubirizi district and are expanding on this for economic benefit. Young people like Private Lecturer (Marcel) are standing out as champions and advocates of conservation and tourism promotion. And more small scale businesses of youth are starting up massively in all town centers such Chapatti stalls, salons, electronic shops and more youth associations for saving and financial literacy

4.5 Digital Transformation

The youth embracing digitalization in the daily life and more productive use of the digital equipment like phones and computers is notable achievement in the community with estimated 60% of smart phone usage and internet connectivity.

Majority using internet for social media access. And this has led to growth of local media gurus for example Mr. Muzafaru, Rama and others that belong in independent associations of bloggers and therefore, enabling reliable and accessible information sharing on social media. This continues to play big part in community growth especially being able to quickly pass information and also kill misinformation plus being a very powerful avenue for business advertising. The social media has made the community smaller and more united.

Digital transformation has also encouraged on literature development about the existence and establishment of the community, killing untrue and oversimplified stereotypes that had for long time been conditioned on existence of the indigenous Rubirizi District community (Banyaruguru). And on this, Rubiriz Edition Magazine and Newsletter continue to lead this effort with its annual print publication and regular Newsletter which has shown way to encourage other writers for both news and other documents that have come to be easily spread via online platforms.



5.0 YOUTH STRUCTURES

Uganda has a well established youth leadership structure that provides a framework for youth participation in decision-making processes. And this structure is designed to ensure that young people voices are heard and represented at all levels of governance.

At the local government level, youth councils are established at the village, parish, sub county, county and lastly at the district levels. And these councils are intended for providing for a platform for youth to participate in decision-making processes, identify needs, and initiate development projects. And whereas, these youth councils are responsible for mobilizing youth, providing guidance and support, and facilitating resource mobilizing, the youth complain that these structures are just ceremonial with less or no influence to determine how they would suggest to be governed and also effectively input to the policy formulation and decision-making processes. The youth also say that these structures are not financed to implement any decisions and more worse don't even have a youth office space at the district for coordination of youth affairs.

And in addition to local government structures, youth structures also exist within political parties, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). Many political parties in Uganda have youth leagues or wings that provide a platform for young people to participate in party activities and decision-making processes. NGOs and CSOs also work with youth to promote development and social change, providing support for youth education, skills development and entrepreneurship.

Community-based clubs such as youth clubs and associations also play vital role in promoting youth development and providing opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making processes. These platforms enable young people to engage in recreational activities, skills development and community services.

The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 recognizes the importance of these youth structures and aims to build on them to promote youth development and participation in decision-making processes. The plan will provide support for youth leadership development, capacity building and resource mobilization and will also work to strengthen partnerships between youth structures and other stakeholders.

And while, the youth present serious concerns about disappointments in utilizing these structures to influence decision-making and make their voices heard, the structures still provide for critical foundation for promoting youth development and participation or, at least keeping that hope alive.

6.0 THE 10 RUBIRIZI YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES 2026-2031

6.1 Sustainable Tourism and Environmental Conservation

The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 recognizes the importance of environmental conservation and tourism development towards promoting sustainable development and improving the livelihoods of young people in the district.

And this development priority focuses on utilizing the district natural resources that include: Natural forests; Karinzu, Imaramagambo, and Kasyoha – Kitomi, lakes; Edward, George, Kazinga channel, 32 crater lakes and numerous wetlands, Park; Queen Elizabeth National Park for economic development while ensuring their sustainable use for future generations.

Rubirizi district, self proclaimed as ***“Pearl in the Pearl”***, irrespective of this natural resources abundance, which provide opportunities for tourism promotion, job creation and economic growth, faces challenges in balancing economic development with environmental conservation and cultural preservation.



6.1.1 Environmental Conservation

However, there have been significant progress in environmental conservation, there is a pressing challenge threatening natural resources from human activities including the rapid production of disposable materials like plastic products which are exceeding the local capacity to deal with them. Worldwide, about 2 million plastic bags are used every minute and statistics further say that an average person eats 70,000 micro plastics each year. Other include: deforestation, & overfishing.

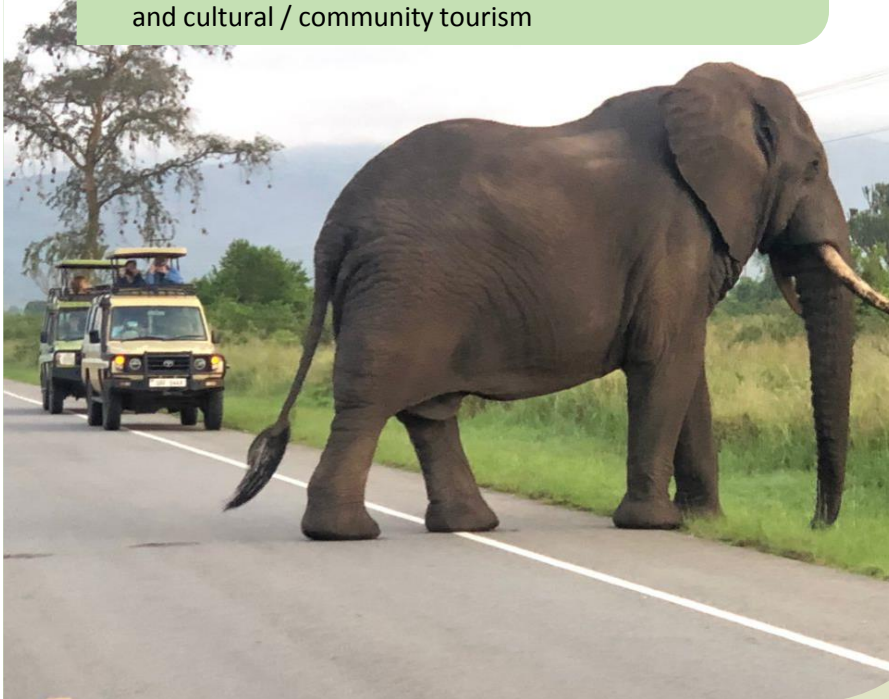
Uganda Forest cover has reduced from 24% in 1990 to 12.4% in 2020 (National Forestry Authority)

Wetlands in the country cover about 15% of its land, with many facing threats from human activities – (Ministry of Water and Energy)

6.1.2 Sustainable Tourism

The vast natural resources in Rubirizi district and rich cultural heritage present a very great potential for tourism development, however, a little hindered by limited infrastructure like community roads, inadequate marketing and insufficient investment.

- Tourism in Uganda contributes about 7.5% to the GDP (Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities)
- Rubirizi District tourism potential remains largely untapped with opportunities in areas like eco-tourism and cultural / community tourism



Rubirizi has risen to exponential interest in tourism promotion and business but without any policy plan that can interfere to regulate the operations of individual operators and even companies that are cropping up every day. And this kind of laissez faire (free range) promotion of tourism and business that is not strategic and conscious to natural resource conservation and development is very detrimental as many natural sites are on the verge of depleting due to uncontrolled pressure from tourism related activities and other human activities like agriculture.



The relevant authorities and stakeholders should immediately formulate a policy guideline defining the following:

Discourage with serious penalty the exploitative tourism that harms the environment, people and animals

Advocate for direct bring back profits from the tourism business to maintain, conserve and develop the tourism destinations.

established tourism companies and individuals must ensure to fulfill corporate social responsibility to promote conservation and waste management drives.

6.2 Agriculture and Value Addition

Agriculture is the backbone of Rubirizi District’s economy providing livelihoods for majority of its population. 88% of the households in Rubirizi District engage and survive on agricultural activities as the dominant sector. Rubirizi receives 1500 – 2000 mm of rainfall annually, and a mean annual temperatures ranging from 12.5 – 3.0 degrees Celsius which favor a conducive and suitable soils for agriculture.

And with a majority youth population, fertile soils and abundant water sources, present a great potential for agriculture. Therefore. Prioritizing agriculture and value addition is very crucial for food security, poverty reduction and economic growth.

However, agriculture in Rubirizi is primarily subsistence-based, with smaller-holder farmers dominating the sector. And the main crops grown include, beans, banana, maize, coffee, cassava and vegetables. Livestock has not been a common agricultural venture in the district and Rural Initiatives for Poverty Alleviation (RIPA) supported by Ripple Effect and other programmes are currently succeeding in training farmers and guiding them in dairy farming.



ADVANTAGE: Fertile soils, Favorable climate, water resources, and market access if farmers organized themselves.

CHALLENGE: Low productivity, climate change, and limited access to finance.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote climate smart agriculture such as conservation agriculture and agro-forestry, improve access to finance through farmers SACCOs, and enhance extension services to provide farmers with technical guidance and training.

Agriculture contributes to approximately 80% to Rubirizi District’s GDP.

Smallholder farmers produce over 88% of the district’s agricultural output.

About 83% of households in Rubirizi depend on subsistence farming as the main source of livelihood.

6.2.1 Value Addition:

There have been very limited efforts for value addition in Rubirizi District with agricultural products. Most of them are sold in raw form including at very low prices in bad seasons of price fluctuation without any efforts to hold them into preserved forms of value addition especially with matooke. In bad seasons, some times a bunch of matooke goes to just UGX 1,000.

However, there are opportunities for value addition, particularly in coffee and dairy farming and this calls for efforts to build capacity like how Rural Initiatives for Poverty Alleviation (RIPA) is doing to raise more Meryna Enterprises”.



Mercy talks of success through the Youth Inclusive Dairy Market Systems project implemented by RIPA and supported by Ripple Effect.

Upgraded from 60 to 1,000 liters of yoghurt per week.

Employs a team of about 14 young people & sends her children to school.

In a bad season, prices of matooke in Rubirizi excessively reduce that a bunch which would have gone for about USHS 15,000 in a normal day can go as low as USHS 1,000 to 1,5000 and this calls for processing and value addition efforts instead of putting off raw produce at very marginal prices.

Value addition can increase the value of agricultural produce by up to 50%. The dairy sector in Rubirizi has capacity to support about 500 youth in value chain



6.3 Youth SACCO

Establishment of a Youth SACCO would play a vital role in promoting financial inclusion and empowering young people to exploit the local available raw advantages to build better livelihoods with self employment.

Rubirizi District currently has several SACCOs in operation and providing financial services to youth and other community members but an intentional youth-based SACCO would provide youth tailored financial services in accordance to their challenges.

Organizing youth entrepreneurs into common SACCO groups would enhance their access to finances and this approach allows for:

Easy identification to cater for specific needs of youth, and tackling challenges of the youth entrepreneurs.

Local opportunities:

There is an already existing SAACO infrastructure, government support programs youth-based funding projects, and partnership opportunities.

Recommendations:

Establish youth focused SACCOs targeting youth and providing tailored financial services and support, provide financial literacy training programs among the youth, fostering partnerships between SACCOs, government agencies and private organizations to support youth entrepreneurship.



Financial Inclusion is very vital in amplifying youth-led enterprises as most young people face the challenge of lacking startup capital and yet the available financial institutions offer unfavorable conditions for financial access, therefore a youth SACCO in Rubirizi will offer tailored financial services to the young people well cognizant of their surrounding challenges in accessing startup loans in the already existing financial infrastructure.

About 25.1% households in Rubirizi are headed by youth (18-30 years). And these young people need as low as USHS 200,000 and less to startup something to cater for their dependents. But about 60% and more would not easily access these finances for startup

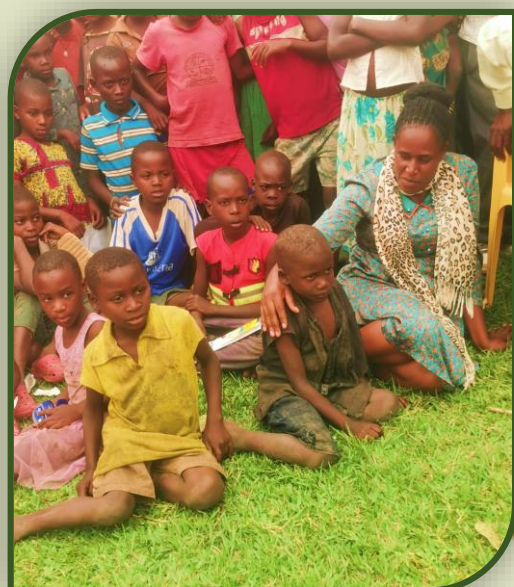
6.4 Vocational Education Training (VET)

Uganda's socio-economic gap that is causing a rural-urban disparity is continuously becoming severe, with rural areas lagging behind. The rate of multidimensional poverty in rural areas in Uganda is more than double the rate in urban areas with 93% of illiterate people in Uganda living in rural areas

Vocational education and training (VET) has become a vital component in addressing rural development challenges. With many young people in rural areas of Uganda struggling to find decent work and escape the cycle of poverty, vocational skilling has been identified as a critical tool for equipping them with the essential skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit needed to thrive in an increasingly competitive job market.

Young people suffer limited employable skills with many of them resorting to Boda-boda riding and young girls forced into early marriages. Subsistence farming dominates with no other stable source of income. And to combat these issues, the **Empowering Youth through Sustainable Vocational Skills Training for Economic Transformation** and equipping about 600 – 1,000 unemployed youth and vulnerable groups (women and people with disabilities) with marketable vocational skills would significantly enhance employability, entrepreneurship and economic prospects.

80% of youth are unemployed or underemployed in menial jobs for lack of employable skills. 60% households live below the poverty line and only 10% of youth are able to access formal vocational training due to poverty.



Such young people in Rubirizi at 7-15 years have not yet gone to school and are likely never to attend, they need outside formal-school solutions to catch up with others.

Vocational Education Training programs can increase employability by up to 80%. And the youth of Rubirizi are calling out to the government to establish a government-funded vocational institute in the district.



Bunyaruguru Vocational College located in Rugyenda – Omukidandali, Ryeru sub county – Rubirizi district along Ishaka-Kasese high-way. Students training in bakery skills – if you don't have a product have a skill

6.5 Digital Transformation

Uganda has had significant strides in digitalization, with mobile networks expanding connectivity even in rural communities such as Rubirizi. But Rubirizi digital infrastructure remains lacking and skills remain underdeveloped compared to global standards though there has been some remarkable improvement.

As it is estimated that internet usage among people of ages 18-30 (youth) in Rubirizi district, despite being a rural society, is also nearly universal, like are the global standards. The most critical stage is the ability and need to utilize this connectivity and digital literacy productively.



Apart from for social connectivity, digital transformation in Rubirizi district has not yet reached the quality stage for economic productivity. About 90% of the youth who use internet, it is majorly for social media and commonly for Whatsapp and Tik tok to connect with the rest of the world and it is said that this addictive usage has continued to disrupt the young people from productive work.

Uganda is ranked 138th globally in ICT readiness, highlighting the need for greater investment.

Only 43% of students in the EU reach a basic level of digital skills and this number should likely be lower in Uganda and Rubirizi in particular. Highlighting the need for digital literacy training.

While, 78% of Uganda's population is under 30 years, this presents a significant opportunity for digital transformation to harness this demographic dividend.

Complete Digitalization would create new job opportunities in emerging sectors like e-commerce, digital marketing and software development.

Opportunity:

Complete Digitalization would create new job opportunities in emerging sectors like e-commerce, digital marketing and software development. Increase access to information and improving employability.

Recommendations:

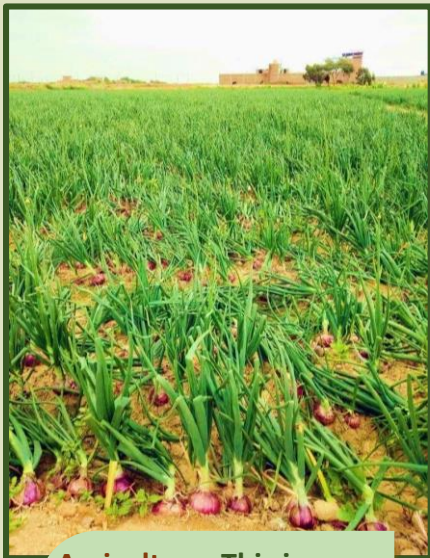
Invest in digital infrastructure including internet connectivity

Digital skills training programs for the youth focusing on emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Promote entrepreneurship and innovation in digital industries, providing support for startups and small businesses.

6.6 Employment and Enterprise Development

Rubirizi District has significant potential for economic growth driven by its own natural resources including tourism development and agriculture value addition. But the district faces challenges that include limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure and lack of necessary skills among the youth.



Agriculture: This is a priority and significant sector in Rubirizi with more opportunities for value addition and entrepreneurship. And most young people are engaged informally in this sector either without knowledge or capacity to earn more.



Small Business Startups: This has potential to drive economic growth in the district with more youth starting enterprises like chapatti stalls, salons, electronic shops and also in the hospitality sector and agriculture.

Tourism: Rubirizi district natural endowment and proximity to Queen Elizabeth National Park offers opportunities for tourism development, creating jobs and generating income.



Empower youth through skills development, mentorship and access to employment opportunities

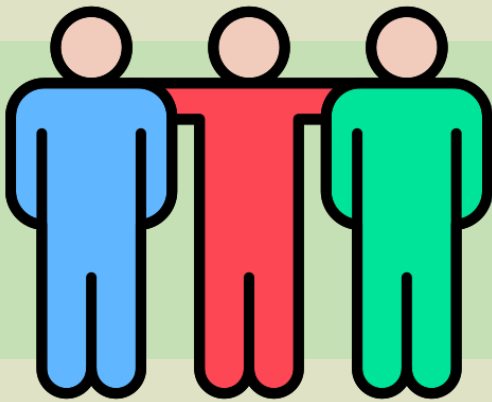
Provide entrepreneurship training and access to finances for small business startups

Support farmers in value addition including processing, packaging, and marketing of agricultural products.

6.7 Unity and Togetherness

The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan prioritizes the need for promoting community cohesion and social harmony through inclusive decision-making processes. Remember Rubirizi has a culturally diverse community with various ethnic groups, religions and age groups and therefore, there will likely present community need to call out for reconciliation and togetherness initiatives.

The Katerera-Bunyaruguru: There has been a standing and never-ending debate about the Katerera-Bunyaruguru differences. And this was amplified more with the change of name from the greater Bunyaruguru to Rubirizi following the granting of the district status in 2010. This comes about from the cultural differences and which continue to present differences in situations of community co-existence especially during the period of choosing leaders and with distributing resources and this challenge needs clean and unity-minded leaders to reconcile these differences.



Encouraging the community decision-making avenues to actively come into play and these include:

Youth associations, Elders associations and Religious leaders associations should be incorporated as necessary decision-making bodies through the district local ordinances.



Ensure inclusive decision-making processes, involving all stakeholders (youth, elders and religious leaders)

Promote Community dialogue and conflict resolution initiatives to address conflicts and promote social cohesion.

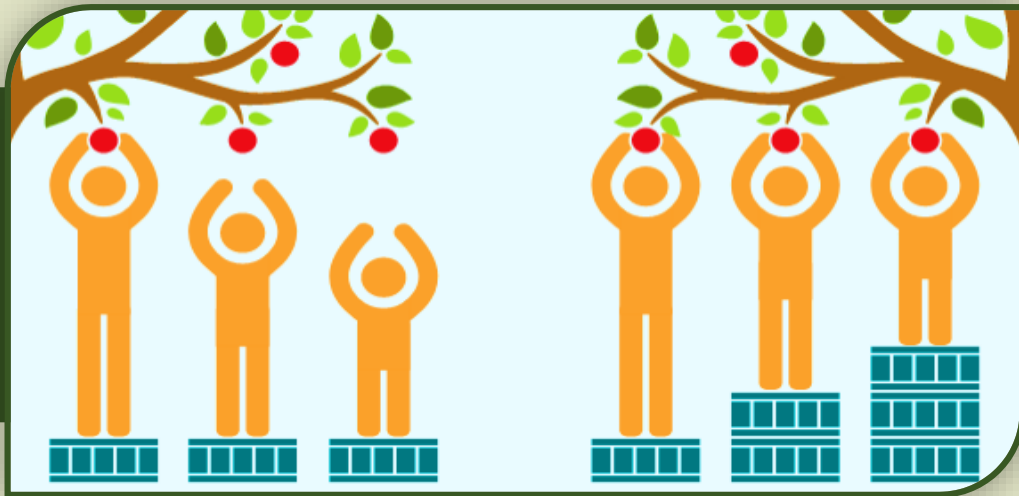
Encourage cultural events and activities that promote unity and togetherness, celebrating the diversity in the district.

6.8 Equal and Equitable Resource Distribution

This priority for youth development in the Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 aims to address the dissatisfaction with the imbalance in distribution of resources in the district. This priority will ensure that resources are distributed in a fair, transparent and equitable manner while taking in account the needs of different age groups, genders and geographical locations.

There has been un equal access to opportunities, services, and resources, like it is another serious issue in the country at large. which has exacerbated poverty, imbalance and social tensions.

- **Develop a framework for allocating resources in a fair, transparent and equitable manner**
- **Conduct regular needs assessments to identify the needs of different communities and prioritize resource allocation accordingly**
- **Promote inclusivity which includes ensuring women, youth and people with disability are included in decision-making processes and have equal access to resources.**



6.9 Sports Development

Sports Development in Rubirizi should focus on addressing the challenges of financing for both the private and community sports teams and local competitions which is one of the main disruptions to collapse of private owned and community sports establishments.

Regardless, Rubirizi district has experienced significant successes in sports, particularly in football. The district football team which was funded by Honorable Nalongo Arinaitwe Jeniva managed to win the 2024 Ankole Districts Football Tournament and Bunyaruguru Football team which was sponsored by Honorable David Katureebe Tugume became the first locally-based team to qualify for the FUFA Big League. And you will realize that all these teams and competitions have been financed by politicians and thus facing challenges of sustainability due to limited funding and reliance on politicians and political schemes.



The Nyakasharu playground which has been the center for sports activities in the district is shared with the weekly market and is slowly losing the required standards of hosting FUFA games due to enchainment on the land and disturbed by poor drainage in the area. It is therefore, imperative that the community looks at an alternative as Sports in Rubirizi continues to grow, with establishment of more sports companies and more engagement in external sports competitions

Diversify funding sources by establishing partnerships with local businesses, NGOs, and corporate sponsors to reduce dependency on politicians for sports funding

Regular physical activity can improve mental health and reduce risk of chronic diseases.



6.10 Youth Political Participation

Participation of youth in politics is very crucial for shaping the future of democracy in the country. In such a youthful population, it is essential to encourage and support young people involvement in decision-making processes.

In Uganda, youth participation in politics has gained momentum in recent years. The country has made notable strides in promoting youth involvement in leadership and decision-making processes. This is evident in the increasing number of young people participating in elections and holding public offices.

Rubirizi District has witnessed a surge in youth participation in politics, with notable wins in recent elections. For instance, a young man of 30 years, Obed Agaba Byakureka, won the LC5 Chairperson election, defeating the two-terms incumbent and a former member of parliament. Additionally, a young lady from Rubirizi, Amanyua Julian, made history by competing in the Western youth Member of Parliament race.



Promote civic education in schools and communities to increase awareness about the importance of youth participation in politics.

Encourage inclusivity in decision-making processes and ensuring that youth voices are heard and represented.

Establish mentorship programs that bring together young leaders with experienced politicians and leaders.

Provide training and capacity building for young people to develop leadership skills, public speaking and governance.

Create youth-friendly spaces for political engagement including online platforms and social media.

Organize youth conferences and forums to discuss issues affecting young people and promote youth participation in politics.

Establish youth councils at the district and local levels to provide a platform for youth to participate in decision-making processes

Provide funding for youth-led initiatives and projects that promote youth participation in politics.

7.0 FIVE KEY PICKS FROM POLICY PRIORITIES AND ASKS IN THE 2026-2031 NATIONAL YOUTH MANIFESTO

7.1 Sports and Creative Arts

This is mentioned in the Rubirizi youth wins of 2021-2026 with the Rubirizi District Football team winning the Ankole Districts Football Cup in 2024. Kichwamba High School also raised the district flag high with it reaching at the national level in the post primary soccer gala competitions.

Sports and Creative Arts also appear in the Rubirizi District youth Development priorities of 2026-2031 and now we pick it from the 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto, showing how vital it is to invest and consciously guide the implementation of the Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan on towards Sports and Creative Arts and also portraying the alignment of these policy documents to guide the young people in their pursuit for seizing the available advantages to better their lives focusing on the youth as drivers of a modern and prosperous Uganda.

The 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto is concerned about the under-recognition in the national policy and frameworks of this creative sector and under funding yet a big chunk of the youth and national population majority are comprised under this sector and most of whom who would have lacked meaningful employment outside the sector.

In the development priorities of Rubirizi youth 2026-2031, there is evident worry about sports funding which most times has been from sponsorships from politicians. Bunyaruguru United Football Club and Tigers Football club both were funded by politicians with young men employed as footballers, have together not managed to turn-up for participation this 2025-2026 sports season under unclear circumstances. Both of the principal owners and politicians did not manage to get through the recent NRM primaries.

78% of content creators surveyed in 2023 had never received training in intellectual property, branding or digital marketing – (Uganda Communications Commission)

Fewer than 10% of districts have any form of government-supported artistic space – this absence of hubs stifles innovation, peer learning, and commercial growth of creative.

Only 18% of secondary schools have dedicated sports spaces and most quality facilities are concentrated in the central region

27% of district Sports Officers have formal training, leading to inconsistent and poorly coordinated local sports initiatives.

7.2 Governance and Security

7.2.1 Youth Political Participation

Youth participation in politics is very vital for young people to stand up and seize the available local opportunities to better their lives because they need to have their voices heard and suggestions of how they desire to be governed implemented, it is therefore great that the 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto also captures this priority as it is also considered in the Rubirizi Youth Development Plan 2026-2031. And as Rubirizi youth still struggle to find quality and meaningful participation in politics, this plan had earlier testified how there have been some serious wins with election of young people in big political positions in the district via the NRM party primaries 2025.

Allocate 50% of National Youth Council funding to the district youth Councils to enable them establish functional structures that can supervise effectively youth empowerment programmes and support youth inclusion in government programmes

7.3 Human Capital Development

7.3.1 Employment Creation

As unemployment continues to hit hard in the country, and it is worse for a rural society without an active economy like Rubirizi. Therefore, it is necessary to have attention to this priority in the 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto which asks for increased investment in education, creating more opportunities for youth and supporting youth entrepreneurship. The Rubirizi Youth Development plan calls out for agricultural value addition, tourism-based opportunities and then support for youth-based business startups.

The NDP1V target of creating 47,413 annual jobs by FY2029/30 from 39,611 in FY2023/24 is inconsiderate of status quo

7.4 Agro-Industrialization

The 2026-2031 National youth manifesto asks for development of a youth strategy on agro-industrialization to enhance young people participation in agriculture along the agricultural value-chain through increasing access to agriculture finance.

In alignment to the youth Manifesto, this plan noted the call from youth on establishment of the youth SACCO to provide youth-based financial services.

53% of Uganda's population subscribed to the internet in 2022

Internet access costs in Uganda remain high

7.5 Digital Transformation

The 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto notes that the youth believe that integrating digital technologies plays a crucial role in modern job creation strategies & alleviating other youth-based challenges

CHALLENGES OF THE YOUTH

- The youth in Rubirizi still face several challenges that hinder their development efforts and meaningful participation in the community and some of these challenges included:
- Many young people in Rubirizi lack employment opportunities and leading to frustration and disillusionment.
- A great deal of youth have either dropped out of school before completing Advanced secondary level or never attended school at all and are trapped in that kind of state of helplessness. And yet the community has no solutions for out-of-formal school situations.
- The youth in Rubirizi and like in any other part of the country, on facing the youth-related challenges are trapped in mental health issues such as depression, anxiety and stress and this accounts for the increased suicide cases among the young people in the district.
- Poverty and economic stagnation are significant challenges in RUBIRIZI District affecting the youth and with very little chances of escaping the situation due to little or no efforts and good will of the community to forge ways to help them overcome this challenge.
- Young people in Rubirizi are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other health challenges
- Limited access to resources and finances such as capital, land, and technology therefore making it difficult for young people to start and grow businesses.

50.9% of youth aged 18-30 years are not in education, employment or training

About 80% of youth (18-30 years) are constrained by access to affordable credit

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Skills development and entrepreneurship through Vocational Education Training (VET). Youth in Rubirizi ask the government establish a government-funded Vocational institute.



Agriculture and Agri-business. Young people in Rubirizi must go beyond traditional agriculture and venture in value addition of the agriculture produces to maximize agricultural profits and also overcome bad seasons of price fluctuations of raw produces



Young people in Rubirizi must totally desist from blind support and loyalty to politicians if they are to meaningfully and consciously participate in politics and influence policy and decision-making processes.



Partnerships and collaborations of the youth and NGOs, CSOs, government programmes and institutions, businesses etc, are very vital for furthering youth agenda and realizing the priorities of this plan.



Access to technology, advocating for innovation hubs, paving for innovations in ICT solutions and hunger for digital literacy are very vital for youth to compete against the experienced older generations that are not technology-flexible

CONCLUSION



The Rubirizi District Youth Development Plan 2026-2031 is a comprehensive and inclusive policy statement inspired by The 2026-2031 National Youth Manifesto calling out the young people to exploit the local opportunities to better their lives and aiming to empower them to reach their full potential and contribute to the district's economic development. This plan is built on a thorough analysis of the current situation, challenges and opportunities facing the youth in the district.

The plan was developed through a participatory and consultative process and thus, identifying key priority areas for intervention. The plan also recognizes the importance of promoting youth participation in decision-making processes and ensuring that youth voices are heard and represented at all levels.

For a successful implementation of the Rubirizi District youth development plan 2026-2031, it will require a coordinated effort from all stakeholders including government, development partners, CSOs and the private sector. It will also require a commitment to providing necessary resources and support that the plan is implemented effectively and sustainably.

Finally, this development plan is a critical tool for promoting youth development and contributing to the district's economic growth and development. With confidence, the collective effort of all stakeholders will enable the plan to achieve its goals and make a lasting impact on the lives of young people in Rubirizi District.

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RUBIRIZI DISTRICT YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2026-2031

**THE YOUTH EXPLOITING THE
LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR A
BETTER FUTURE**