

Joint Effort to Save the Environment

NEWS LETTER

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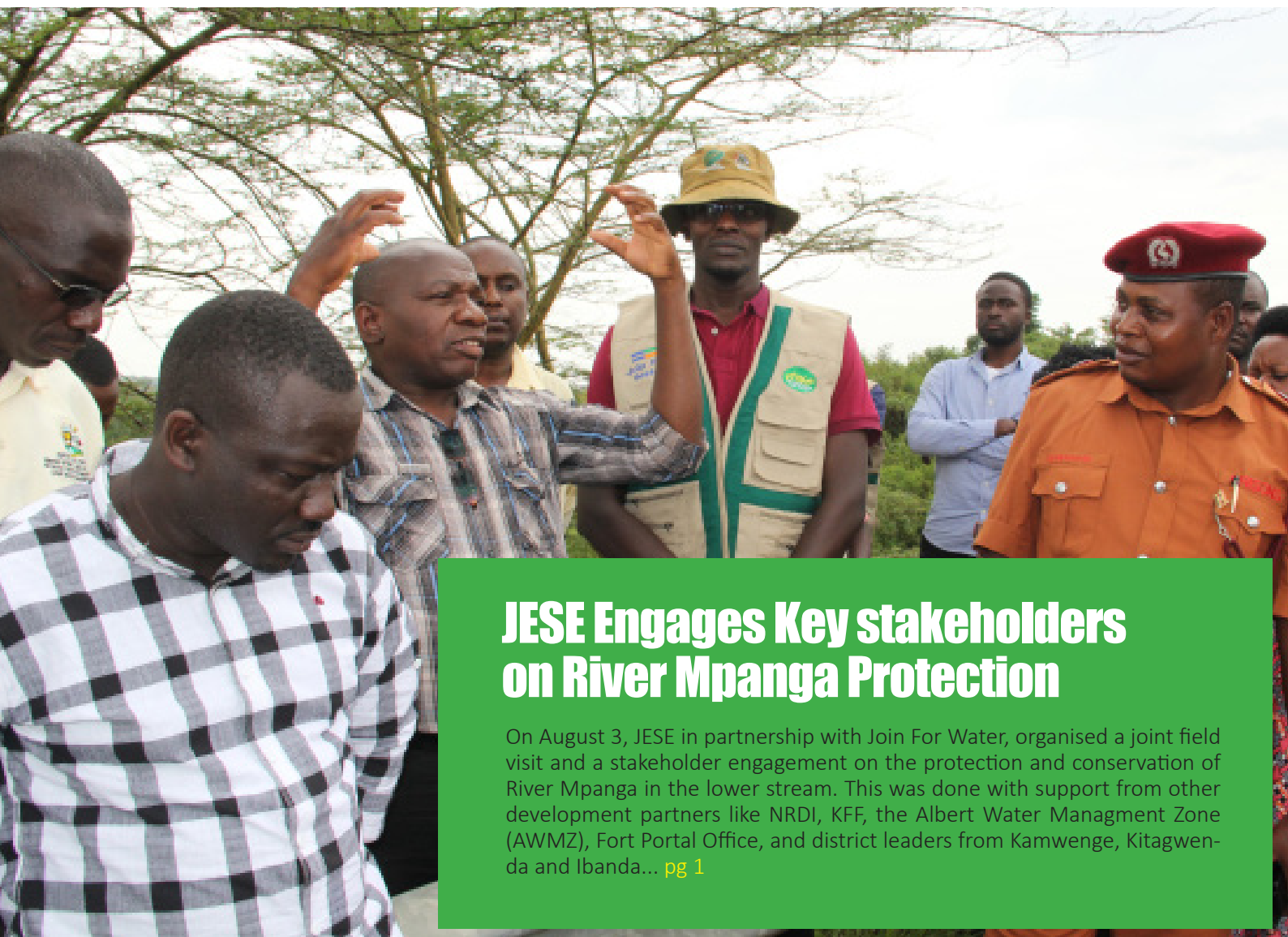
Skilling transform- ing lives of youth

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Bright: I earn a living from urban farming

My name is Johnson Bright. I stay in Rwengoma, central Division, Fort Portal Tourism City. JESE found when I was already a farmer... [pg 5](#)



JESE Engages Key stakeholders on River Mpanga Protection

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Editor's Note



Our dear esteemed reader,

We bring to you this August issue with so much joy. As part of culture, we always strive to ensure that our work creates meaningful impact in all the areas where we operate.

During the course of this month, we were able to take great steps towards achieving our set goals in relation to our strategic plan. Key under this is Advocacy where we are working tirelessly to ensure that we engage decision makers and other stakeholders on critical issues that relate to natural resources governance, sustainable agriculture, water rights and access among others.

As you will read, we were able to successfully engage the stakeholders on the protection of a River Mpanga buffer zone in the lower stream (Ibanda, Kitagwenda and Kamwenge) and secured their commitments on the same!

In addition, our projects and programmes are also impacting the lives of intended beneficiaries especially women and the youth, who are transforming their families and communities at large. As you read this August issue, I hope you will find it educative and inspirational. Together, we can make a community where people and nature flourish!

I wish you a nice reading.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

By: Christopher Tusiime
Communications and Advocacy Officer - JESE

ABOUT JESE

JESE is an indigenous non-government, service-providing organization registered as a company by guarantee NO 47579 and the NGO BOARD 55914/1019. Since its establishment in 1993, JESE, through her work in improved Agriculture Production and Natural Resources Management and long term development, has greatly contributed to improved livelihoods of target beneficiaries and provided opportunities for a better life especially for the rural poor households and communities.

Vision

A community where people and nature flourish.

Mission

To facilitate people-centred innovative actions that foster equity, sustainable management of natural resources and livelihood improvement

Overall Goal

Empowered community equitably accessing and sustainably managing natural resources for improved livelihoods and well-being.

Our values

- Environmental Integrity
- Transparency
- Gender Equity
- Volunteerism
- Teamwork



JESE Engages Key stakeholders on River Mpanga Protection

On August 3, JESE in partnership with Join For Water, organised a joint field visit and a stakeholder engagement on the protection and conservation of River Mpanga in the lower stream. This was done with support from other development partners like Natural Resources Defence Initiative (NRDI); Kyaninga Forest Foundation (KFF); the Albert Water Management Zone (AWMZ), Fort Portal Office, and district leaders from Kamwenge, Kitagwenda and Ibanda.

This engagement followed a wide public outcry that Kiburara Prison authorities were carrying out farming activities specifically growing of maize, within the buffer zone of River Mpanga at the boarder of Ibanda and Kitagwenda districts. Community members who made calls during our radio talk shows that were aimed at water resources conservation, also noted that due to this practice from a government entity, surrounding community members had also resorted to degrading the buffer zone, claiming they were copying from the prison authorities.

As a result, JESE organised a stakeholder engagement that started with a field visit to Kabeeza in Kitagwenda district, where we had made an intervention of demarcating the buffer zone of the same river with concrete pillars. This was aimed at showing the leaders, including the Officer-in-charge of Kiburara Prison, what we have done before in regard to protection of the trans boundary water resource.

At this point, district leaders from Ibanda, Kamwenge and Kitagwenda including the development partners, appreciated the conservation efforts by JESE and Join For Water that were visible at Kabeeza and urged the Kiburara Prison leader to copy and implement the same.



A concrete pillar showing the start of the 100-metre buffer zone from River Mpanga in Kabeeza village, Kitagwenda district. The pillar is one of those that were planted by JESE in partnership with Join For Water.

From this point, stakeholders were also taken to the bridge in Ibanda district, where Kiburara prison farming activities were being carried out within the buffer zone of River Mpanga. Here, the aim was to ensure that everyone looks at the extent of degradation caused not just by the Kiburara prison that is located in Ishongororo town council in Ibanda, but by surrounding communities too.

It was after observations that stakeholders made commitments towards the restoration of the degraded buffer zone or River Mpanga.



Isaiah Ndungu, the Join For Water Country Coordinator, speaking to stakeholders at the bridge where the River Mpanga buffer zone has been encroached on by Kiburara Prison and surrounding communities

Commitments

OC Kiburara Prisons Farm, SP Byakatonda Tanazio

- a) Commit to immediately stop the farming activities that are encroaching on the buffer zone of Mpanga and particularly those at the boarder of Ibanda and Kitagwenda Districts.
- b) Monitor the farming activities of communities neighboring Kiburara Prisons Farm
- c) Work with the district officials and development partners to protect, restore and conserve the buffer zone within my jurisdiction.

LCV Chairpersons of Ibanda, Kitagwenda and Kamwenge Districts

- a) Commit to work with development partners, technical and political leaders in their respective districts to ensure that River Mpanga buffer zone and other water resources are restored and protected.
- b) Ibanda and Kitagwenda districts chairpersons commit to work with Ibanda Prison Authorities to ensure that the encroached buffer zone along the Kiburara prison's farm is restored and protected against present and future degradation.

Ministry of Water (AWMZ-Fort-Portal)

- a) Commit to engage and follow up Kiburara Prison Authorities to immediately start demarcating the buffer zone that has been encroached on and planting trees around it
- b) Commit to coordinate all the stakeholders, districts and development partners to ensure restoration, protection and conservation of the degraded buffer zone of River Mpanga.

Sub County Leaders of Kanara and Ntara

- a) Commit to continue sensitizing the communities on protection and conservation of water resources, especially River Mpanga.
- b) Support and work with development partners to protect River Mpanga buffer zone.

Resident District Commissioners (RDCS) of Kamwenge, Ibanda and Kitagwenda

- a) Commit to sensitize communities to stop encroachment on water resources, in particular river Mpanga buffer zone.
- b) Work with and support development partners' awareness campaigns aimed at protecting River Mpanga buffer zone.

The district natural resources technical personnel from Ibanda, Kamwenge and Kitagwenda

- a). Commit to monitor the protection of the River Mpanga buffer zone and also provide the technical knowledge and guidance in regard to the same

Chief Administrative officers

- a) Commit to closely monitor district staff engaged in buffer zone protection and continue to engage development partners on the same.

Developments partners

- a) Commit to support demarcation and restoration activities of the degraded buffer zone within the Kiburara Prisons Farm.
- b) Continuously engage and offer technical guidance to the management of Kiburara Prisons Farm.



A photo taken in August 2023 showing charcoal within the buffer zone of River Mpanga in Ibanda district. Stakeholders committed to end this practice with immediate effect



A photo taken in August 2023 showing maize growing within River Mpanga buffer zone by Kiburara Prison. Ministry of Water ordered the Prison OC to stop all farming activities within the buffer zone with immediate effect.



Skilling transforming lives of youth

The Skill Up! Project implemented by JESE in partnership with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and funding from BMZ is yielding fruits, about 3 years since it was launched.

Started with the aim of improving the lives of vulnerable youth, the project has been implemented in Kyenjojo, Fort Portal and Bunyangabu district, in Rwenzori sub-region.

With a few months to its end, those who were trained in different trades like hairdressing, brick laying and concrete practice, tailoring, welding and others say they are now able to use the skill they acquired to make ends meet.

For instance, Kobusinge Jennifer, a youth who was trained in welding from Rwimi town council in Bunyangabu district, says her life is changing for the better. After her training in the male-dominated trade, she moved to Kasese district where she upgraded to another trade in interior designing, and now her employer, Nylx Interiors & Art, says she is among the best in interior designing in the whole district.

To Kobusinge, this was made possible by the support she received from JESE in partnership with Welthungerhilfe and BMZ.

“I used to save money from the lunch money that I would receive from JESE while I was still undergoing training at Rwiimi. It is the same money I used to pay for my training in interior designing and carpentry and now I’m also able to earn a living. I can do most of the jobs in welding, carpentry and interior designing,” Kobusinge says.

Kobusinge says that in the next five years, she sees herself owning a company like the one where she is currently working, which will give jobs to other youth in her community while at the same time fetching her some good income.

Like Kobusinge, Grace Namwanje is a youth from Kyenjojo district who was supported by JESE to be skilled in tailoring. Namwanje, who dropped out of S.1 during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and failed to make it back to school, says she is now earning from the skill she acquired.

“After our training, JESE with WHH people came here and gave us sewing machines. I received mine and took it to Rwiibaale where I started a small business of making some clothes like Bitenge and selling them. I also have a mobile money business and I earn a commission from it. I’m now able to make some good money a month and sustain myself and my family,” Namwanje says.

320
The number of youths skilled under the Skill Up! project in Rwenzori Sub region



Some of the JESE Skill Up! staff pose for a photo with Namwanje (in a green tshirt) at her shop in Rwiibaale, Kyenjojo district.



With JESE Support, Masika Mobilized Community members to make money

The breakout of COVID-19 pandemic paused an unpredictable challenge that triggered creative minds to find solutions to the world's most health and life threatening catastrophe.

The wise minds were also finding means to grab a business opportunity and take advantage of the prevailing situation. Access to hand washing and clean water was a very crucial forecast for the business minded people. In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, in Kateebwa sub county of Bunyangabu district, a determined and enterprising women's group came together with a shared goal of improving their livelihoods while addressing a crucial need addressing WASH challenges in their community.

With a passion for clean and safe water for drinking and good sanitation, the women formed a group called Kateebwa Assa Thuhererane Amenge womens group. Leading the challenge was Ms. Yonia Masika, an activity local community leader with a heart in community livelihood improvement. By the time of the outbreak, Masika was a local community women group leader gifted with a large following of women and her word of advice was always taken seriously by the group members she led. Recognizing the pressing need for access to clean and safe water for drinking and improved sanitation, Ms. Masika mobilized her fellow women in Kateebwa 1 village to establish a pottery and liquid soap making business with the major aim of helping her community to stay health during the Covid-19 crisis.

The business was further supplemented by other economic activities like basket weaving and growing of vegetables in the backyard.

Using innovative means that were cost effective, the group started producing water pots and liquid soap, and sold to community members, schools and government offices at affordable prices.

Masika, the group chairperson, recalls how the members were struggling financially before they started the business yet there was plenty of resources they could use to improve their livelihoods.

“We realized that safe and clean water was a challenge here in the mountainous areas, especially storage and preservation. So in a creative manner, I thought about bringing women together especially those with a skill in pottery to make a group and produce many pots because market was readily available in most cases. The challenge I got was that the people who had the skill were elderly women so I attracted younger women to also join the group because the business requires some energy especially in collecting the clay from wetlands” Masika recounts.

She says when the young women joined the group in 2020 at the peak of COVID-19, there arose a need for liquid soap across the country for hand washing. Liquid soap became another business added to the group activities and it attracted a lot of income for the group.



A plastic bottle of 500ml of liquid soap was at Shs 2,000 during COVID-19 and it was a must to buy soap because of hand washing. We would also buy fake soap from vendors. One day an organization called JESE donated soap to the sub county and they told us that it had been made by one of the women's group they had trained from Kabahango village. We appealed to the Community Development officer to request JESE on our behalf to also train us on the same. In 2021 Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE) accepted our request and trained us in liquid soap making under their projects called WASH and Learn”

Muhindo, a group member, also recalls how they started the soap business with very little knowledge and skill. She said that the major challenge was to have access to materials used in making the soap but also the knowl-

edge on how the soap was done yet they thought it was a good business to invest their money.

Their liquid soap and pottery business motivated the group members to spread awareness about WASH practices and the importance of drinking safe water and hand washing and through interactive engagements the group's income increased from Shs 378,000 in 2021 to Shs 950,000 by end of July 2023.



Biira Joyce the treasurer of the group says: “The WASH business flourished, the people gained through having products that have helped households have safe drinking water and affordable soap for handwashing and doing household chores. The community again saw a significant reduction in waterborne diseases, improved overall health and boost economic productivity”

The Kateebwa Assa Thuhererane Amenge women's group has provided employment opportunities for local women, contributing to financial independence and self-esteem.

Facing challenges along the way from sourcing materials to navigating processes, the women supported each other through regular meetings and skill sharing sessions with support from JESE the development partner.

“

The future plan is to invest their resources into modern products like supply of ceramic filter, water purification and distribution, as well as water dispensers and hand sanitizer which will further boost their income and take the group to another level.



Bright: I earn a living from urban farming

My name is Johnson Bright. I stay in Rwengoma, central Division, Fort Portal Tourism City. JESE found when I was already a farmer. Then there came a councillor who said he wanted some farmers who can benefit from a project of Urban Farming by JESE and IDP. I already had 20 tins of berries, five sacks where I was growing cabbages from and 10 for spinach. So those of us who were able registered ourselves.

We were then taken for the first training and when I returned, I came back and I improved on the gardens. In the short run, I found myself with 50 tins for only strawberry growing. I also expanded on cabbage growing.

In terms of support, JESE gave me the stands for my berry tins since they grow better when on a raised surface than when on ground and they also gave me the seeds.

On a weekly basis, I can make like Shs 10,000 from the berries alone. Spinach can also give me Shs 10,000 per week. I also make some good money from the sale of cabbages and tomatoes.

With the support from JESE and IDP, I have been able to expand my gardens by using the same knowledge I acquired from them.

I have also learnt how to make organic pesticide using local and easy-to-access raw materials. This pesticide that is made using urine from rabbits is very effective and not harmful to the crops and the soil. It makes my crops look so healthy and the yields have since increased. I will forever be grateful to JESE and IDP for the opportunity of working with us the youth to earn from urban farming.

PICTORIAL



Stakeholders that were invited for the joint field visit and dialogue meeting for River Mpanga buffer zone restoration in Kiburara, Ibanda district pose for a group photo.



The Head of Natural Resources Department at JESE, Mr BU-SIINGE Christopher (Right), engaging with the Ibanda LCV Chairperson, Happy Herbert (in the middle) and Kerudong Paskwale from Albertine Water Management Zone.



A Sign Post by Join For Water, JESE and other partners erected in Kabeza, Kitagwenda district with information asking communities to protect River Mpanga banks.



Join For Water Country Representative, Isaiah Ndungu, engaging the stakeholders and the OC Kiburara Prisons at the boarder of Ibanda and Kitagwenda districts on the urgent need for the restoration of the degraded buffer zone of R. Mpanga.



The Head of Natural Resources Dept. at JESE, Mr BUSIINGE Christopher, showing the Kiburara Prison OC, SP Byakaton-da Tanazio, the buffer zone demarcation and protection done by JESE in partnership with Join For Water along R. Mpanga in Kanara Sub County, Kitagwenda District.

PICTORIAL



Fort Portal leaders during a joint field visit for the Skill Up! beneficiaries in Fort Portal Tourism City.



The Deputy Resident City Commissioner (right), Emmanuel Busiinge, speaking to stakeholders at My Hair Guy salon, one of the trainers for the Skill Up! project.



A trainer at Agaba's workshop (Right) speaking to stakeholders during the joint field visit for the Skill Up! project in Fort portal in August 2023.



A Skill Up! graduate speaking to stakeholders at her start up in Mpanga Market



A training work plan for hair dressing trainees at My Hair Guy in Fort Portal.