



Ngugo Multipurpose irrigation scheme boosts household incomes in Rwampara district



Ministry of Water and Environment officials pose with farmers of Ngugo multipurpose scheme in Rwampara district

Residents of Ngugo village, Ngugo parish, Bugamba sub-county, Rwampara East County in Rwampara district are hopeful they will soon reach the Middle-Income stage due to availability of adequate water for irrigation.

In 2019, the government of Uganda through the Department of Water for Production (Regional Centre – South Western) constructed Ngugo Multipurpose irrigation scheme in Rwampara district.

The scheme has so far benefitted over 1300 residents of Kigando, Rukuzi, Ngugo 1 and Ngugo 2, Kikuto 1 and Kikuto 2.

The government gave farmers inputs for the first and second seasons which enabled them to harvest crops worth Ugshs17M during the first harvest.

Farmers grow high value crops such as; cabbages, watermelon, tomatoes and vegetables.

Evarist Mubangizi chairperson Ngugo Arable Crop Farmers Association says that out of the 44 members in total, 26 are females and 18 are males. They grow high value crops (which do not take long to harvest) such as; watermelons, tomatoes, green paper and potatoes.

“Our committee has enabled us to work together in the interest of the irrigation scheme. We have managed to save money worth Ugshs13M which we use to take care of our families,” says Mubangizi.



Farmers plant high value crops such as beans

He adds: "since we have water for irrigation throughout the year, we manage to earn more money during dry spells as farmers from other areas which do not have an irrigation scheme,"

Buwala Vangirista a resident of Ngugo village, Buganda sub-county reveals how people used to travel to Mbarara hospital to treat waterborne diseases. "God sent us President Yoweri Museveni who thinks about us and solves our problems. We used to suffer from waterborne diseases but ever since we received this irrigation scheme, we get clean water," says Buwala.

He adds that: "walking long distances had affected our families. Rapists used to waylay our daughters but we are now happy that they no longer walk long distance because we have pipes supplying water to our homes,"

Hygiene and sanitation have improved due to availability of clean piped water provided by the Ministry of Water and Environment through the Department of Water for Production (Regional Centre -

South West).

The beneficiaries of the irrigation scheme earn income which they use to pay school fees for their children and provide health-care for their families.

Farmers also save more money to buy livestock which they take care of to mature and multiply. They later sell offspring to get money and buy more land. Buwala reveals that as a result of available income from farming, cases of domestic violence have drastically reduced.

"Poverty is the root cause of all quarrels in our homes. With this irrigation scheme, we have managed to practice farming throughout the year. We have income to solve family needs so there are no disagreements amongst married couples," says Buwala.

He requested government for extension of the water for irrigation to other areas so that the entire Bugamba sub-county practices modern farming throughout the year.

Edward Tumwesigye a senior engineer at the Ministry of

Water and Environment, Department of Water for Production Regional Centre - South West based in Mbarara City says the irrigation scheme gets water by gravity from the hills.

According to Engineer Tumwesigye, farmers can no longer depend on rains to practice agriculture. "Irrigation focuses at growing more varieties of high value crops that feed many people and this is what is done in Rwampara district," says Engineer Tumwesigye.

He reveals that the multipurpose scheme is on 8 acres and uses 43 taps to serve more than 59 beneficiaries who are in 5 villages. The reservoirs have storage capacity of 150cm³. Linda Akankwasa Geraldine a sociologist at Water for Production Regional Centre - South West says that irrigation is crucial for transfer of bulk water from areas of plenty to areas of scarcity.

Akankwasa says the Ministry mobilises communities/ stakeholders because sustainability is collective responsibility.