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FROM OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS TO NEW HOPE: SHS1.047 BILLION GOVERNMENT PROJECT SET TO TRANSFORM KIGUMBA SECONDARY SCHOOL

Kiryandongo District has embarked on a major infrastructure expansion at Kigumba Secondary School with the launch of a Shs1.047 billion classroom construction project expected to significantly improve learning conditions for more than 1,400 students while addressing years of overcrowding and inadequate facilities.

The project, being implemented under the Uganda Secondary Education Expansion Project (USEEP), will deliver eight new classrooms, 15 VIP latrine stances and an incinerator within six months, marking one of the biggest investments in the school's infrastructure since it was established over three decades ago.

The groundbreaking ceremony brought together officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports, district leaders, school administrators and members of the local community, all of whom described the project as a critical intervention in strengthening access to quality secondary education in Kiryandongo District.



Deputy RDC Jonathan Akweteireho (C) holding a pick axe during the ground breaking ceremony of the construction of classroom blocks at Kigumba SS

Established in 1989 as a community school before being government-coded in 1996, Kigumba Secondary School has experienced steady growth in enrolment over the years. Today, the school accommodates 1,201 students under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) programme and an additional 204 private students.

However, this rapid growth has far outpaced the available infrastructure.

The school currently operates with only 13 classrooms, 18 VIP latrine stances and 28 teachers on the government payroll, facilities that administrators say are no longer adequate to serve the growing student population.



Some of the existing classroom blocks constructed by Government of Uganda at Kigumba SS

For years, overcrowded classrooms have affected effective teaching and learning, forcing students and teachers to share limited space while putting immense pressure on sanitation facilities.

School Head teacher Moses Mayanja welcomed the government's investment, describing it as a timely intervention that will transform the school's learning environment.

He expressed gratitude to President Yoweri Museveni and the Ministry of Education and Sports for prioritizing infrastructure development at Kigumba Secondary School.

"The new classrooms will greatly improve the learning environment and contribute to better academic performance," Mayanja said.

He also commended Kiryandongo District leadership for consistently supporting the school, citing the provision of desks and the construction of a deep borehole during the previous financial year, projects that have improved both classroom learning and access to safe water.

Despite the ongoing improvements, Mayanja noted that continued government support remains essential as enrolment continues to increase under the Universal Secondary Education programme.

Board of Governors Chairperson Julius Balikagira said the additional classrooms would finally ease congestion that has remained one of the school's biggest challenges.

He, however, observed that infrastructure expansion alone would not be sufficient without addressing staffing shortages.

"As enrolment continues to rise, government should allocate more teachers to match the growing number of learners," Balikagira said.

He further highlighted other critical infrastructure gaps, including the absence of a library, an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) laboratory and an administration block.

According to him, these facilities are fundamental to delivering quality education and preparing learners for an increasingly technology-driven world.

Representing the district leadership, Chief Administrative Officer Anselm Kyaligonza reaffirmed the district's commitment to ensuring the successful implementation of the project.

He pledged full technical and administrative support throughout the construction period and called upon Robich Engineering Services Ltd, the contractor undertaking the works, to complete the project within the six months stipulated in the contract.

Kyaligonza emphasized that government expected quality workmanship and value for money from every public investment.

He also appealed to residents living around the school to take ownership of the project by closely monitoring the construction works and safeguarding government property.

"This is a community project. Protect it and ensure it is delivered to the required standards," he urged.

The Ministry of Education and Sports said the project introduces a unique implementation model intended to strengthen transparency and local ownership.

Engineer Patrick Bongomin, the Project Manager, explained that the construction is adopting a Community-Driven Development approach similar to that previously implemented under the Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP).

Under this arrangement, community members have been organized into Community Project Management Committees and Community Procurement Committees that will participate in overseeing implementation.

According to Bongomin, the approach empowers communities to directly participate in project supervision while increasing accountability and protecting public investments.

However, he warned committee members against mismanagement of project resources and urged them to strictly adhere to government guidelines governing procurement and financial accountability.

While welcoming the project, Deputy Resident District Commissioner Jonathan Akweteireho raised concerns over reports that some officials from the Ministry of Education were allegedly attempting to influence decisions made by the community committees for personal interests.

He warned that such interference could undermine transparency and compromise the successful implementation of the project if left unchecked.

Akweteireho described the existing infrastructure at Kigumba Secondary School as inadequate for the current enrolment, noting that the new facilities would significantly improve the school's appearance and learning environment.



Some of the existing classrooms constructed by PTA at Kigumba SS

He also cautioned residents against theft of construction materials, recalling previous incidents where government projects had suffered losses due to vandalism and theft.

He specifically referenced the construction of the Kigumba–Kyenjojo Road, where construction materials were reportedly stolen, urging the community not to repeat the same mistakes.

As construction begins, expectations among learners, teachers and parents remain high.

Education stakeholders believe the new classrooms and sanitation facilities will reduce congestion, improve hygiene, create a more conducive learning environment and ultimately enhance academic performance.

Yet, many also acknowledge that addressing classroom shortages is only one step towards improving education quality. Additional teachers, a library, ICT facilities and administrative infrastructure remain essential if Kigumba Secondary School is to fully meet the growing educational demands of one of Kiryandongo District's fastest-growing communities.

With construction now officially underway, the next six months will determine whether the ambitious investment delivers on its promise of providing better learning opportunities for hundreds of young Ugandans seeking quality secondary education.