



Quarter Four 2024/2025 Newsletter

ABESAMIHIGO/GAKENKE District



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Introduction

This newsletter presents a summary of the progress achieved by Gakenke District between April and June 30, 2025 (Quarter 4 of the 2024/2025 fiscal year), reaffirming the District's continued commitment to citizen-centered development. It outlines key accomplishments and milestone events across multiple sectors—including Economic Development, Social Development, and Good Governance—highlighting sustained efforts to improve the well-being of all residents.

Gakenke District is one of Rwanda's 30 administrative districts and is located in the Northern Province. It has a total population of 389,110, comprising 50.5% females (196,512) and 49.5% males (192,598). The majority of residents—approximately 92.8%—rely on agriculture as their main source of livelihood. The district is particularly known for its production of high-quality coffee. However, its mountainous landscape increases its vulnerability to the effects of climate change, resulting in frequent natural disasters that present ongoing challenges to local communities.

Key Updates

Quarterly achievements are not limited to the following:

- Ejo Heza Long-Term Savings Scheme recorded savings of RWF 529,699,479, achieving 141.3% of the annual target.
- Employment creation reached 7,947 productive jobs.
- Agriculture yielded 739.8 metric tons of fully washed coffee.
- Road infrastructure: The Coko-Nkoto-Nyange feeder road was fully rehabilitated, spanning 15.94 kilometers.
- The 1-kilometer Gakenke-Nemba road segment was upgraded and paved with asphalt.
- Community-Based Health Insurance: By June 30, 2025, 81.2% of beneficiaries had paid their contributions for the 2025–2026 fiscal year.
- The Girinka Program provided 850 cows to vulnerable families.
- Education: 40 school classrooms were rehabilitated, achieving the annual target.
- Adult literacy programs trained 2,519 individuals, surpassing the target.
- Local governance infrastructure was enhanced through the rehabilitation of 17 cell offices and construction of 2 new ones, meeting all planned objectives.

Key activities in Economic Cluster

Dukundekawa Musasa is a cooperative offering a unique coffee tourism experience in Gakenke District.

Dukundekawa Musasa Cooperative, is one of leading coffee processing cooperative in Gakenke District, is renowned for the exceptional quality and rich flavor of its coffee. They cultivate, and process high-quality coffee known as “Musasa Coffee,”

On 28 May 2025, we visited Dukundekawa Musasa Cooperative, a renowned institution recognized for its excellence in coffee cultivation and processing – from the farm to the cup.



It fully owned by 1,193 members, works with over 4,500 coffee producers in the area, Dukundekawa Musasa owns a roastery, a dry mill, and four wet mills, with an annual capacity to produce up to 12 containers of green coffee per year.

It is widely recognized both in Rwanda and internationally, as it attracts coffee tourism enthusiasts who visit the cooperative to experience the entire coffee production process – from cultivation to the final cup.



The cooperative’s coffee has gained a distinguished reputation both in Rwanda and internationally, celebrated for its unique flavor profile and authenticity. It is cultivated and processed in Ruli Sector, Gakenke District.



Testimony of Habumuremyi Wellars, a Beneficiary of the Ejo Heza Long-Term Savings Scheme



In 2017, the Government of Rwanda introduced the Ejo Heza Long-Term Savings Scheme with the aim of enabling Rwandans to voluntarily save for their future. The scheme is inclusive, allowing all individuals—whether formally employed, self-employed, or working in the informal sector—to open personal savings accounts and make regular contributions.

Although the program was initially met with challenges by some, who feared they might not be able to access their funds or anticipated administrative hurdles, many early participants now testify to its reliability and positive impact.

One such beneficiary is Habumuremyi Wellars, a resident of Nemba Sector in Gakenke District. As one of the early enrollees, he began saving with Ejo Heza from the outset and later accessed his savings without difficulty.

At the time the scheme was launched, Habumuremyi was working as a teacher. He quickly registered for the program and opted to save RWF 3,000 from his monthly salary. Encouraged by a case in which the family of a deceased Ejo Heza contributor was able to access the savings smoothly, he later increased his monthly contribution to RWF 10,000.

Upon retirement, he initiated the process to withdraw his savings.

“I approached the sector agriculture officer and inquired about accessing my savings. He confirmed it was my right. I then submitted a formal request to the Director General of RSSB along with the necessary documentation. Three weeks later, the funds were transferred to my mobile account,” he recounted.

In total, Habumuremyi had saved RWF 260,000. With accrued interest exceeding RWF 100,000, he received RWF 374,000, which he used to address urgent personal needs.

Gakenke District is recognized as one of the leading Districts in advancing the Ejo Heza savings initiative. By the end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the district ranked second at the national level in scheme performance, having mobilized RWF 529,699,479 in savings—significantly surpassing its target of RWF 350 million.

EjoHeza SAVINGS as at 30.06.2025					
No	AKARERE	IBYAGEZWEHO	INTEGO	%	INTARA
1	Burera	453,094,244	300,000,000	151.0%	Amajyaruguru
2	Gakenke	529,699,479	375,000,000	141.3%	Amajyaruguru
3	Rulindo	417,932,158	300,000,000	139.3%	Amajyaruguru
4	Rubavu	516,769,094	375,000,000	137.8%	Iburengerazuba
5	Rwamagana	406,548,330	320,000,000	127.0%	Iburasirazuba
6	Nyarugenge	375,655,047	300,000,000	125.2%	Umujyi wa Kigali
7	Musanze	372,541,762	300,000,000	124.2%	Amajyaruguru
8	Kicukiro	360,778,733	300,000,000	120.3%	Umujyi wa Kigali
9	Ngoma	356,625,700	300,000,000	118.9%	Iburasirazuba
10	Rutsiro	352,904,192	300,000,000	117.6%	Iburengerazuba
11	Gatsibo	351,716,170	300,000,000	117.2%	Iburasirazuba
12	Nyabihu	351,133,193	300,000,000	117.0%	Iburengerazuba
13	Gicumbi	438,307,912	375,000,000	116.9%	Amajyaruguru
14	Kayanza	342,572,503	300,000,000	114.2%	Iburasirazuba
15	Nyaruguru	341,114,777	300,000,000	113.7%	Amajyepfo
16	Karongi	340,810,420	300,000,000	113.6%	Iburengerazuba
17	Kirehe	335,497,491	300,000,000	111.8%	Iburasirazuba
18	Bugesera	357,362,618	320,000,000	111.7%	Iburasirazuba
19	Huye	334,705,718	300,000,000	111.6%	Amajyepfo
20	Rusizi	416,304,630	375,000,000	111.0%	Iburengerazuba
21	Nyagatare	353,541,170	320,000,000	110.5%	Iburasirazuba
22	Gasabo	410,709,569	375,000,000	109.5%	Umujyi wa Kigali
23	Ngororero	328,363,876	300,000,000	109.5%	Iburengerazuba
24	Muhanga	321,239,179	300,000,000	107.1%	Amajyepfo
25	Nyamagabe	320,869,763	300,000,000	107.0%	Amajyepfo
26	Kamonyi	316,277,012	300,000,000	105.4%	Amajyepfo
27	Gisagara	310,667,756	300,000,000	103.6%	Amajyepfo
28	Ruhango	305,083,961	300,000,000	101.7%	Amajyepfo
29	Nyanza	303,315,510	300,000,000	101.1%	Amajyepfo
30	Nyamasheke	352,256,627	375,000,000	93.9%	Iburengerazuba
TOTAL		11,074,398,594	9,510,000,000	116.5%	-

Gakenke: Central Bank Urges Women to Embrace Mobile Financial Services



On May 4, 2025, the National Bank of Rwanda (BNR) conducted an outreach campaign in Gakenke District aimed at promoting the use of mobile financial services among women. The initiative seeks to close the gender gap in financial inclusion by encouraging more women to adopt mobile-based financial tools.

The campaign is part of broader national efforts to expand access to financial services and improve the overall well-being of communities, particularly by empowering women economically through platforms such as mobile money.



According to BNR data, there remains a significant disparity in mobile financial service usage between men and women, with only 72% of women utilizing such services compared to 81% of men. The data also indicates that more than one million women in Rwanda have yet to adopt mobile financial platforms. This campaign is designed to narrow that gap.

Speaking to residents of Gakenke District, Dr. Justin Nsengiyumva, Deputy Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, emphasized the importance of addressing the existing inequalities: "While mobile transactions are increasingly common across Rwanda, research shows that women remain underrepresented in this space."



He continued: "We identified several barriers—such as irregular income, inactive accounts, and limited access to phones within households, where a single device is often controlled by the male head. These are challenges we aim to overcome through this initiative."

Key Activities in Social Cluster

Testimony of Mukamugema, a beneficiary of the housing program designed to address human security challenges



Mukamugema Bernadette is among the many vulnerable residents in Gakenke District who previously lacked adequate shelter or lived in severely deteriorated houses that posed significant threats to their safety. Today, she expresses profound appreciation for the life-changing support she has received.

Before her home—initially inherited from her late husband was rehabilitated, Mukamugema endured harsh living conditions. The structure was so deteriorated that during rainy nights, she had no safe place to sleep and lived in constant fear for her well-being.

She recalls the moment she was informed by her village leader that she had been identified among the most vulnerable individuals eligible for housing support—a moment she describes as one of great relief and renewed hope.

Mukamugema now extends her sincere gratitude to the District leadership for providing her with a safe and dignified home. “I can now sleep peacefully, without fear,” she says—a simple yet powerful testament to the transformative impact of inclusive social support programs.

Gakenke: Parents Commend the Impact of Early Childhood Development Centers on Child Growth and Household Productivity



Parents in Mugunga Sector, Gakenke District, whose children are enrolled in home-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers, have expressed their appreciation for the positive impact these facilities have on both their children's development and their ability to manage household responsibilities.

Muhawenimana Athanasie, one of the beneficiaries, shared her experience:

“I start my day by preparing my child and taking them to the ECD center. I then return to my work and later pick them up when the day ends. This routine allows me to be productive at home while ensuring my child receives quality early learning.”

Similarly, Nahimana Zacharie noted that while his wife leaves early for farming activities, he takes their child to the ECD center before proceeding to care for their livestock.

Speaking during the celebration of National Early Childhood Development Day held on May 20, 2025, the Vice Mayor for Social Affairs in Gakenke District, Mrs. Uwamahoro Marie Thérèse, encouraged parents of young children to embrace home-based ECD centers. She emphasized their critical role in fostering early cognitive development.

Gakenke: Kabere Village in Muzo sector was recognized to be the first to pay health insurance (2025-2026) for all village residents



Residents of Kabere Village in Muzo Sector have emerged as top performers in meeting the target for early payment of Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) contributions for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, which officially begins on July 1, 2025. By April 13, 2025, the entire village had completed their payments—well ahead of the deadline.

According to the Village Leader, Mr. Nsengiyumva Emmanuel, this achievement is the result of a community-driven approach in which residents form small mutual support groups to facilitate CBHI payments.

"Each household group (Isibo) convenes regularly to mobilize contributions, with every member saving based on the size of their family," he explained.

He further noted that the village includes economically vulnerable families, who are assisted by more financially stable community members.

"We identified people willing to support those in need by saving on their behalf, ensuring they can meet their health insurance contributions without hardship," he added.

By the close of the 2024–2025 CBHI cycle, Gakenke District had achieved an 81.2% coverage rate for the upcoming year's contributions, with 36 villages already attaining 102.5% payment compliance.

Compassion International and EAR Rwanda Donate Cows to 25 Vulnerable Families



The Anglican Church of Rwanda (EAR), in collaboration with Compassion International, donated cows to 25 vulnerable families in Gakenke District as part of their efforts to promote socio-economic resilience.

On May 20, 2025, ten families from Kamubuga Sector received cows during a handover ceremony attended by the District Division Manager, Mr. Ntoranyi Dieudonné. The remaining fifteen families from Kivuruga Sector benefited from the same support on June 18, 2025.

Gakenke: Chance for Childhood Distributes Assistive Devices to 110 Children with Disabilities



Chance for Childhood, in partnership with UNICEF, Gakenke District and other supporting organizations, provided assistive devices to 110 children with disabilities from the catchment areas of Nemba, Ruli, and Gatonde hospitals. Held from June 9 to 10, 2025, the event was attended by the Vice Mayor in charge of Social Affairs, Madame Uwamahoro Marie Thérèse, representatives from the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), and other stakeholders. The beneficiaries included both school-going and non-school-going children, who received various mobility aids such as wheelchairs, crutches, white canes, and other essential devices aimed at improving their quality of life and inclusion.

Key activities in Good Governance Cluster

Gakenke District Residents Commend the Establishment of Modern Service Delivery Offices



Residents across multiple sectors of Gakenke District have expressed their appreciation for the construction and rehabilitation of modern administrative office buildings at both sector and cell levels. These upgraded facilities now provide citizens with access to public services in clean, organized, and dignified environments.

By the close of the 2024–2025 fiscal year, Gakenke District had completed the construction of four new service delivery offices and the renovation of 17 cell-level offices, aligning with national standards for citizen-centered service provision.

In Rukore Cell, Cyabingo Sector—one of the beneficiaries of the new infrastructure—residents previously received services from a small, makeshift office housed in a former classroom. Due to space constraints, service delivery was often overcrowded and inefficient, with some residents leaving unattended. Today, the community celebrates the availability of a well-equipped, purpose-built office that allows for efficient, timely, and respectful service.

Similarly, in Rusasa Sector, the existing office block was expanded from five to eight rooms. Residents commended the improved infrastructure, noting that the upgraded facility not only enhances service delivery but also enables staff to work in a more professional and accommodating environment.



#Kwibuka31 – The 31st commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi



On April 7, 2025, the international community stood in solidarity with the people of Rwanda to mark the commencement of the 31st Commemoration of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and the start of the 100-day period of remembrance.

In Gakenke District, the official ceremony took place in Muhondo Sector and was honored by the presence of distinguished guests, including Members of the Rwandan Parliament: Hon. Nzamwita Deogracias, Hon. Mukarusagara Eliane, and Hon. Musangabatware Clément.



Throughout the 100-day commemoration period, Gakenke District hosted a range of memorial activities. Among them was a special event attended by Hon. Uwizeye Judith, Minister in the Office of the President, who joined local leaders and community members in remembering the victims of the 1994 genocide in the former Busengo Sub-prefecture.



The Governor of the Northern Province, Hon. Mugabowagahunde Maurice, also participated in key commemoration events. These included honoring Wiped Families during the genocide, as well as paying tribute to those who killed and Dumped into Nyabarongo and Mukungwa rivers.



During the events, various dignitaries delivered speeches of solidarity, underscoring the importance of remembering the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi. They emphasized that commemorating this tragic chapter provides an opportunity to honor the lives of over one million innocent victims who were brutally murdered within just 100 days, and to reaffirm a collective commitment to preventing such atrocities from ever happening again.

They also raised public awareness on the systematic planning and execution of the Genocide against the Tutsi by the former regime, its profound impact on Rwandan society, and its wider regional and international implications. Citizens were strongly encouraged to reject genocide ideology, divisive rhetoric, and all forms of hate speech.

Gakenke District Council approved the budget for the 2025–2026 fiscal year



During its ordinary session held on June 29, 2025, the Gakenke District Council, chaired by Council President Mr. MUGWIZA Télesphore, formally approved the District's budget for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, totaling RWF 36,410,317,098. This marks a reduction from the previous year's budget, which exceeded RWF 39 billion.



The session was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), including Ms. KEMBABAZI Coaster and Ms. MBABAZI Diane, alongside various District officials.

In addition to approving the new budget, the Council reviewed the District's budget execution report for the 2024–2025 fiscal year. The report showed a 93% execution rate, which Council members commended as a strong indication of effective and responsible public financial management.

Radio Rwanda engaged in a community outreach event with residents of Gakenke District



In line with the RBA Hafi Yawe program—an outreach initiative by Rwanda Broadcasting Agency aimed at bringing media services closer to citizens—Radio Rwanda journalists conducted a community engagement event in Ruli Sector, Gakenke District, on June 19, 2025.

The event served as a platform for local residents and leaders to showcase progress in development and social welfare. Through live broadcasts and on-the-ground interviews aired directly on Radio Rwanda, participants from Ruli and surrounding areas shared their experiences and success stories. As part of the program, a live edition of the #Dusangireljambo talk show featured the Mayor of Gakenke District, Mrs. Mukandayisenga Vestine, the Vice Mayor in charge of Economic Development, Mr. Niyonsenga Aimé François, and the Vice Mayor in charge of Social Affairs, Mrs. Uwamahoro Marie Thérèse. Together with Radio Rwanda journalists, they reflected on Gakenke’s development journey and the importance of citizen-centered communication in advancing local governance. Young people showcased their talents and participated in various recreational activities.



Northern Province Assesses Implementation of Gakenke District’s 2024–2025 Performance Contracts

On June 26, 2025, the Mayor of Gakenke District, Madame Mukandayisenga Vestine, officially received a high-level delegation from the Northern Province, led by the Governor, Mr. Mugabowagahunde Maurice. The visit formed part of a follow-up mission to assess progress and outcomes related to the implementation of the District’s 2024–2025 Imihigo (performance contracts).



During the visit, the delegation held a strategic meeting with the District’s leadership and staff, aimed at offering technical guidance and recommendations to strengthen the implementation of key performance activities before the close of the fiscal year.



The delegation, joined by members of the District Executive Committee, conducted site visits to selected Imihigo projects. The objective was to evaluate progress on the ground, identify implementation challenges, and highlight areas that may require support or advocacy at the provincial level. The team expressed appreciation for the District’s consistent performance and commitment to delivering on its development targets, while also providing actionable suggestions for further enhancement of service delivery and results.

Gakenke District hosted a Media tour and Press Conference.



On June 12, 2025, journalists representing various media houses across Rwanda visited Gakenke District to assess ongoing development and social welfare initiatives. The visit provided an opportunity for the media to observe progress on the ground and engage directly with District leadership.

Among the key sites visited was the Kagano Model Village in Muzo Sector, which provides safe and modern housing for families relocated from high-risk areas. The delegation also toured the newly established BAHO Coffee factory in Gakenke Sector, which processes premium-grade coffee for both local and international markets.

In Janja Sector, the journalists visited the recently renovated Rutake Health Center, upgraded to improve access to quality healthcare services. The tour continued to Cyabingo Sector, where EFEMIRWA Mining Ltd operates. The company employs 439 workers and extracts between four to five tons of valuable minerals such as coltan, cassiterite, and beryl.

The visit also included the newly constructed Rukore Cell office, which exemplifies the district's commitment to strengthening public service delivery through infrastructure development.

In Kamubuga Sector, the group observed key agricultural projects, including terracing, consolidated bean farming, and newly constructed school classrooms aimed at improving education outcomes.

The tour concluded with a dialogue session between the journalists and the District's senior leadership, including the Mayor, Ms. Mukandayisenga Vestine; Vice Mayor for Economic Development, Mr. Niyonsenga Aimé François; Vice Mayor for Social Affairs, Ms. Uwamahoro Marie Thérèse; and Executive Secretary, Ms. Nankunda Jolly. The session focused on strategic priorities and initiatives being implemented to accelerate sustainable development and improve the livelihoods of Gakenke residents.



Youth General Assembly Highlights the Role of Young People in Job Creation



On June 27, 2025, the District Mayor, Madame Mukandayisenga Vestine, chaired the Youth General Assembly under the theme, "Youth: The Pillar of Our Nation's Development."

During the assembly, participants reviewed the activities undertaken by youth during the 2024–2025 fiscal year and deliberated on planned initiatives for 2025–2026.

The event included discussions on the youth's role in job creation, opportunities available through national funds such as the Business Development Fund (BDF), and strategies for effectively leveraging these resources to promote personal and economic advancement.

At the conclusion of the assembly, a young individual recognized for outstanding achievements was honored with a cow, gifted by fellow youth members.



Appreciation



**Mukandayisenga Vestine,
Gakenke District Mayor**

Gakenke District would like to take a moment to extend our sincere gratitude for being part of our newsletter community. Your involvement and attention are greatly appreciated, and we are thankful to have you as a partner in our efforts to improve the well-being of our citizens.

Your continued support motivates us to keep producing and sharing meaningful content. Whether through your feedback, ideas, or simply by reading our website, it's individuals like you who make all our efforts truly rewarding.

Be sure to stay tuned for exciting updates, exclusive content, and other surprises that will be coming your way in the next quarter. Gakenke District also wishes all our stakeholders, line ministries, and citizens a prosperous and successful Happy New Fiscal Year.



This NewsLetter was Produced

by:

NSENGIMANA Evariste,

**Public Relations, Media and Communications officer
at Gakenke District**

CONTACTS:

Telephone: 0788972522

Email:

nsengimana.evariste@gakenke.gov.rw