

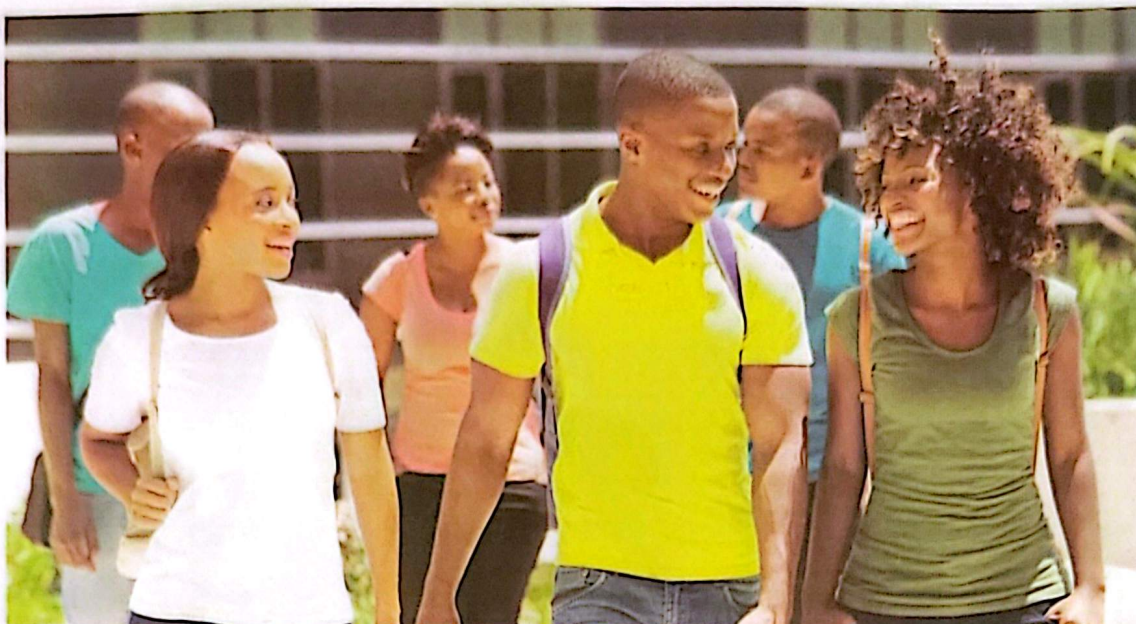
WHAT YOU OUGHT TO KNOW. "The young do not know enough to be prudent, and therefore they attempt the impossible, and achieve it, generation after generation" Pearl S. Buck



young&free



Preparedness. "Moving in on itself is not a bad thing. However, the question is on whether the two students/people moving in are ready to do that." Henry Nsubuga, Manager, Counselling and Guidance Centre, Makerere University



EXPERT VIEW

Moving in on itself is not a bad thing. However, the question is on whether the two students/people moving in are ready to do that. So, it should be well thought out, and the two parties should consider the challenges in moving in together.

For example, being available for one another, the financial aspect and commitment. The implications of moving in on students are serious. For young people, academics require extra time, which they may not be able to offer due to the responsibilities that come with moving in.

So, no one should go into that when they are not ready to face some of these challenges.

Henry Nsubuga, manager, Counselling and Guidance Centre, Makerere University

Can I live with my partner at campus?

Cohabiting. To some students, university is a place to mess around and have fun before entering the real world of adulthood. To others, it is a chance to test-drive a grown-up lifestyle, attitude and relationship, Desire Mbabali & Dorcus Murungi write.

TELLING OUR EXPERIENCE



Moreen Owumugisha, Industrial Art at Makerere University

"Boys are unpredictable, he will tell you that he loves you today and soothe you with sweet nothings but that same boy will tell those exact words to different girl. So to avoid all those scenarios, it is better to stay with them."



Edmond Nyaika, Mass Comm at Mountains of the Moon University

"Staying with a girlfriend comes along with other responsibilities such as financing her dress code, paying her salon fees as well as feeding her. At the moment, I cannot handle such responsibilities because I'm still a dependent on my parents."



Ivan Agaba, Bachelor of Education in Literature and English, Makerere University

"It is very stressing to stay with a girlfriend while at campus, any boy needs some free space to breathe and flirt around with some other girls before moving into real marriage. However, I can only stay with her if I impregnate her."



Patience Karungi, Mass Comm Kampala University

"If my boyfriend proposes that we share a room while at campus, it is okay with me. That is an opportunity for me to save, especially if he is from a well to do family. I will get all the money that I get from my parents like hostel fees and up keep and I bank it."

When you move around different university halls and hostels, especially in the evenings, you will notice a number of couples moving hand-in-hand as they stroll up and down the roads.

For many students, campus is a perfect opportunity to mess around and have fun before entering the real world of adulthood. To others, it is a chance to test-drive a grown-up lifestyle, attitude and relationship as they decide to live with their partners while at university.

Some take it to the extent of 'trial marriages' where couples move in together while at campus. But one wonders, what is the right time for students to start staying together?

Rehema, a former student who prefers to be known by one name, explains that her reasons for moving in with her partner were quite serious. "I had family issues that kept ac-

cumulating until I could not stay at home anymore. Dickson asked me to move in, and I did. My boyfriend used to be by my side all the time more than my mother. I used to open up to him and he was affectionate - which I never received from home. So I never looked at moving in with him as a means of saving, but we shared the little we had together," she says.

Dickson, on the other hands, says: "I, however, wouldn't encourage people to move in while at campus,

unless it is your last resort, because your concentration on books is hindered. You know how relationships can be; you get disagreements and cannot concentrate because your mind has been disrupted. You can't even take a few days away from her so that things cool, because you live together now."

Before long, Dickson and Rehema were expecting a baby. "It wasn't our wish to have a baby but we found ourselves in it. Our needs increased, and

so government allowances couldn't support us - we were both on government sponsorship. My boyfriend had to get gigs to earn more money, and we had classes to attend," Rehema shares.

Patience Karungi, a Mass Communication finalist at Kampala University, says she finds no harm in living with her boyfriend as she pursues her studies. To her, this is an opportunity of cutting costs and leaving a luxurious life that she can't afford all

by herself.

"Staying with a partner while at university is okay since it prevents you from other temptations that come with staying alone," Karungi says.

Edmond Nyaika, a student from Mountains of the Moon University in Fort portal, however, believes that the boys suffer the financial burden which is not fair.

"I only receive peanuts as upkeep from my parents and staying with a girlfriend will require me to share my limited resources," he says.

Parents are not keen on this idea, understandably. "There is no way in the world, if it were in my power, that I would allow my daughter or son to move in or have his girlfriend move in. I believe there is a time to give one's studies all the time and effort one can give them, and then the staying together can come at a later time," says Lillian Ninsiima, a parent.

Most hostels and university halls are known to have rules against couples living together in the premises. According to Bernard Onec, one of the stewards at Nkumba University, they enforce registration on entry at all times in the university to track entrances and exits.

"We have three university hostels for female students and two for male students. The rules clearly prevent girls from moving into the male hostels and the reverse. Though visiting is allowed in both. I am not saying other hostels play by the same rules. These differ from one hostel to another," he says.

While in conventional university residences this is possible, rules are more lax in hostels. Besides, students may also rent out rooms near the university that are not subjected to rules.