

INNOVATION DDAMBA BREATHES LIFE INTO

By Emmanuel Affedda

Christina Ddamba earned the title of Miss Job Creator at St Lawrence University in Kampala and is glad that she has lived up to the billing through innovative recycling. Mr and Miss Job's Creator is an annual competition organised at the university for budding entrepreneurs. Ddamba is a first year student of bachelor of industrial art and design, specialising in innovations. She found delight in reusing plastic bottles and paper rolls to create items that

could be used for interior decoration. Her principle is to use environment-friendly materials. "I am so passionate about being an entrepreneur and I wanted to contest for Miss Job Creator 2017. The idea behind the competition is to find someone who has made a profit from materials that are available within the surrounding environment, but which also help in environmental conservation, so I chose to concentrate on what is considered waste," Ddamba explains. She says plastic bottles and paper rolls were among the most disposed of waste items where she lived, so it was easy to recycle them into other useful products. She has made pool interior décor items such as flower vases, tables and jewellery holders out of the waste products.

Currently, she gets the materials in places around Mukono shopping mall, Magomba Arcade and outside shops in



Displaying a product she made from plastic water bottles downtown Kampala.

HOW SHE DOES IT

Ddamba makes coffee tables out of the plastic bottles. But before she starts, all the raw materials are washed.

Ddamba says she cuts nine bottles from the bottom and then joins them together to make a panel. Two panels are then linked together that look the bottom and upper parts that look the same. After that, she wraps the panels together with plywood.

She attaches a layer of sponge foam onto the plywood with cloth. Everything is then covered with cloth and zipped shut. The zip makes it easy to remove the covers for cleaning when they get dirty.

"I make the tables in different sizes. A set costs sh300,000," Ddamba says.

When it comes to making dining sets out of paper rolls, she cuts the paper rolls open and glues them together into a shape of a chair. She then joins the

pieces using screws to make them stronger. A dash of spray paint gives the finished product an attractive look, and then it is ready for sale at sh400,000.

FLOWER VASES

"For flower vases, I cut the paper rolls on top and then put beads on strings and wrap them around the paper rolls. Or I could paint it, ready to use. Each flower vase costs sh20,000. A set goes for sh80,000, which comprises four pieces," Ddamba says.

The other items she makes include jewellery holders out of the bottoms of plastic bottles. She paints them and pushes a small metallic rod through. This forms tiered cups where jewellery is placed.

When it comes to the market for her products, Ddamba sells at exhibitions and to fellow students at St Lawrence University.



Ddamba sewing the cover of a table made out of plastic bottles

MY BRIGHT IDEA

EVENTS MANAGEMENT COMPANIES COULD AT LAST HAVE THEIR WORK MADE EASY, FOLLOWING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOFTWARE TO EASE THE SELLING OF TICKETS, WRITES AHMAD MUTU



The team of students that developed the ticketing software

STUDENTS DEVELOP SOFTWARE TO

While doing their internship, five computer science and information technology university students developed a system that is set to revolutionise ticketing.

Eddy Wanny, Mowa Makwera, Musa Abdulkarim, Willy Nanzu and Malkia Usanase were interns at Supercom Technologies in Kansanga, Kampala when they created the system.

They were given a task to develop a project and their idea was a ticketing system to simplify work for event organisers and anyone interested in events.

First, the organiser of an event has to register on the system by signing up, creating a username, password and

entering the company name and event tickets they intend to sell.

"From this point, the organiser publishes the event and creates ticketing in different categories — ordinary or VIP tickets and their prices. Interested people can then start buying by dragging the tickets into their cart," Abdulkarim explains. Payment for the tickets is done using mobile money and then the buyer gets a reference number. As developers of the system, they get a small percentage off each ticket sold.

"If a ticket is, say \$10, we can deduct \$0.5 off each one. If an event organiser wants their event to be prominent or on top of other events on the platform in order to be seen easily, they pay a certain amount to be

WASTE



Her products are unique

CHALLENGES

Other buyers find her in Kabowa where she lives. Ddamba, however, complains of Ugandans not embracing locally made items.

She also faces difficulties in collecting the materials she uses. Despite the challenges, Ddamba is thankful that her innovations won her a car when she came top in the Miss Job Creator 2017 contest. For now, she has created jobs for at least 10 people who work with her.

"I have managed to impart an innovative mind in other youths as I have taught them how to recycle waste and earn a living out of it. I also earn some money through product sales," she asserts.

Her plans include setting up a workshop and expanding the market for her products. She says she can also teach wherever she gets an opportunity. Ddamba is keen on building young entrepreneurs as well as creating more jobs for the youth.

EASE TICKETING

put as a featured event.

"We will have three categories of subscriptions — standard, business and premium — that the event organiser will pay us to be featured on. If you have not paid and we have, say over 1,000 events in the platform, yours will not be seen easily. Our system is like Google; when you search, the results that come on top are the ones that are paid," Makwera explains.

The standard subscription rate, for example, is about \$10 (sh35,000) per month to have an event featured. They are currently working to have the same algorithm as Google.

Besides event tickets, they have plans of having other types of tickets, such as air tickets if one wants to travel. But for now, they are studying how far the system can go as they plan on adding new features.

MADE IN UGANDA

NEW PRODUCTS AND DEVELOPING IDEAS THAT WILL AFFECT YOUR EVERYDAY LIVES

KALINAKI QUIT OFFICE JOB TO MAKE BABY COTS

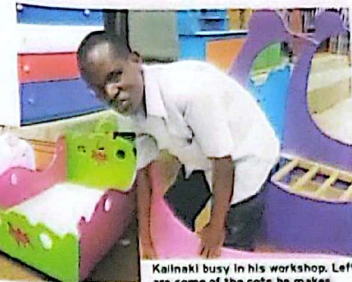
By Vision Reporter

While growing up, Hamis Kalinaki juggled many jobs, but also could get an office job. Little did he know that he would abandon an office job and settle for hands-on work. Today, he is on his own boss and does not regret the many side jobs he did, because they introduced him to the business world.

Born in Nakavule village, Iganga district, Kalinaki is a graduate from Makerere University Business School with a bachelor's degree in business administration. After graduation, Kalinaki was employed at a telecom company, but he was not happy with his salary. He chose to quit and start his own business.

Years earlier, during his \$5 vacation, Kalinaki had worked in a carpentry store owned by Indians, making items out of wood and metal. "I worked with them for four years to raise university fees," he says.

Much as he worked in the store, he found time to sit with the staff working in the carpentry. "In our chats, they shared ideas with me on how to craft beautiful items out of timber and since



Kalinaki busy in his workshop. Left are some of the cots he makes.

I loved what they were doing, I borrowed a leaf," Kalinaki says. So when he quit his job, he went to study for a certificate in carpentry and since then he has never looked back. He opened up a carpentry shop at Kigungu, in Mukono district.

His biggest challenge is the fluctuating prices of timber and other materials, because it affects the way he prices his products. For now, he continues making baby steps in the child-friendly furniture business.

children the best. "That is why I decided to concentrate on products for babies. Whenever you decide to do so many things, sometimes you lose focus. So it is important to focus on one thing at a time," he says.

However, he also makes chests of drawers for baby clothes with the help of support staff. He bought different machines that he uses to make the attractive designs and other machines for spray-painting. He starts each project by drawing a sketch to guide him. After that, he gets down to the real work.

The designs and paints he chooses are among the reasons Kalinaki's furniture stands out compared to ordinary furniture. His biggest clients are parents who make orders to fit their desires or some just buy what has been made and is on display at the workshop.

His biggest challenge is the fluctuating prices of timber and other materials, because it affects the way he prices his products. For now, he continues making baby steps in the child-friendly furniture business.

He recognised that babies are born every day and parents always strive to give their

LOCAL FIRMS BLAMED FOR LOW SOFTWARE UPTAKE

IT NEWS

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT IS A NASCENT INDUSTRY IN UGANDA AND THE UPTAKE OF PRODUCTS IS NOT AS FAST AS IT IS EXPECTED, WRITES JOHN ODVEK



The Laboremus Uganda team creates products for both East Africa and Norway

Software developers from a local company have accused Ugandan banks of not embracing high quality software solutions.

"The banks in Uganda are not taking advantage of IT to ensure efficiency and reach more of the unbanked rural population," Lucrezia Biteete, the managing director of Laboremus Uganda, says.

Laboremus Uganda, an IT consultancy company with roots in Norway, is one of the companies, training local software developers to tap into the growing ICT sector.

Biteete says they work on projects for the Norwegian market and customised software solutions for East Africa. He says although they have worked on many large systems for the Norwegian market, they have not been able to sell their products to local banks.

According to Biteete, the team has developed web portals, digital archives for several ministries, monitoring and evaluation systems for aid programmes, mobile applications and financial systems for the local

finance industry. This includes work with donor agencies and non-government organisations on projects that aim to improve access to financial services for the unbanked rural population.

Biteete says some of their best software developers learnt software development on their own.

"The software engineering course at Makerere is new, and we are just getting some of the first graduates. For the software developers, we normally prefer

that they have some experience before we hire them. Otherwise the training takes long," he says.

The company runs an exchange training programme where, at any one time, two Ugandan staff are in Norway for a period of six months or more.

Biteete identifies some of the challenges they face as high taxes on labour. He says lower taxes would enable them to employ and train more people in business process outsourcing.

Get in touch with us on Facebook/The Sunday Vision