

feature By Gillian Nantume

Oile's quest to heal the sick



SCALING THE HEIGHTS:

She rose from dreams of serving clients in an airplane to owning a hospital. This has enabled Lydia Oile fulfil her life purpose of providing health care to the needy as well as build her portfolio as an entrepreneur.

Walking into Lydia Oile's office at Le Mémorial Medical Services is a little intimidating. First, the atmosphere around the huge hospital is very quiet; you feel the discomfort of hearing your heels clicking on the tiled floor. The cleanliness is in stark contrast to the terribly dusty Kitiko-Kigo Road outside.

Secondly, Oile will interrogate anyone who steps into her domain. However, after the initial inquiries, her passion about helping people comes to the surface. Two years ago, Oile opened Le Mémorial, offering a wide range of services, including general surgery, maternity and paediatric services.

"I think I have always been a very kind person and I love helping others. When I came to live in this area (Kigo) I saw the need to help some people who were not able to afford hospital bills. So, I gave them support. I even opened an account for them at a private clinic nearby."

As time went by though, the Good Samaritan realised her approach could not be sustained since she was spending quite a sum. "Since I

was not growing any younger, I felt my retirement project should be something I really love. I love to see someone come into a hospital, live in a nice environment of the hospital, and then, walk out feeling better, and my intention of having my own hospital was to have a wing that caters for the community at subsidised fees."

The businesswoman, whose bald hairstyle has been her identity for many years, drinks enough water, exercises, eats well, and endeavours to get enough sleep, to keep sickness at bay.

She has travelled the world and seen the medical services offered by other countries. These discoveries brought questions to her mind. "I kept on asking myself why people have to go outside the country for medical services. What would it take for them to have those services here? However, at the time, I was just too ambitious. I did not really consider the financial implications, although I felt I should do something a little different from what other hospitals are doing."

Oile has a medical background,

having trained at Mulago Paramedical School as an aesthetic assistant in the early 1980s, and practiced for a year or two.

Oile, the businesswoman

The mother of four, who entered the world of business in 1991, has seen it all. Oile has, for the last 25 years ran Lawsam Chemicals (U) Limited, a company that deals in industrial detergents, targeting the bottling and hotel industry.

"It is a challenging business and I am proud to say, as a woman, that I have taken it to a high level. I have been the sole distributor for Diversey Inc., a multinational company, for many years."

Oile also has a passion for interior décor which she fans through into installing curtains and I had a chance to look into people's homes. People who really have money drive posh cars but when you enter their homes, what you see is very disappointing.

However, younger people are more interested in décor because of exposure." When your mind is on

