

JOURNEY FROM GRADE II TEACHER TO PHD HOLDER

Starting out as Grade II teacher, Theopista Kaggwa Wandira has climbed the education ladder and recently attained a PhD from Makerere University. She shares her story.

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Starting out as a Grade II teacher, Theopista Kaggwa Wandira is now the principal of Ndegeya Primary Teachers' College, Masaka. She describes herself as a teacher educator and a trainer of trainers who has perfected her art in the 41 years she has spent teaching.

Wandira was motivated by her father to join the teaching profession. But rather than remain content as a grade II teacher, the 59-year-old did everything in her means to advance in her career.

The journey

"I started teaching in 1975 as a Grade II teacher at Bugembe Primary School, Jinja District," recalls Wandira. As a teacher, she felt she needed to push herself to become better. While at Bugembe Primary School, Wandira decided to upgrade her qualifications. She enrolled at Gaba Primary Teachers' College and acquired a Grade III certificate in 1981.

"I was then transferred to Kitante Primary School and while there, I pursued a diploma in teacher educa-

tion, which I got in 1986," Wandira narrates.

With a diploma from Makerere University, she started training teachers at Shimonzi Primary Teachers' College. She received her first degree, a Bachelors in Education, from Makerere University in 1990.

She says, "I felt I needed to upgrade and kept pushing myself."

The quest for education

When she received her degree in 1990, she enrolled for a masters degree in Teacher Education from Makerere University which she attained in 1992.

Between 1992 and 1994, Wandira was a part-time lecturer at the Institute of Teacher Education (ITEC) (now Kyambogo University).

Later that year, she was appointed a principal of colleges. "When you were appointed a principal of PTC's then, it meant that you could be a principal at any college as long as it was a government primary teachers' college," she explains.

She was posted to Busubizi PTC in Mityana District making history as the first female principal of that college.

"In 1998, I was transferred to



Theopista Kaggwa Wandira with her husband at her Masters graduation.

HOW IT ALL STARTED

At 14 years, in 1970, Wandira joined Nkozi PTC (which has since been phased out). "I went into teachers' college after my Primary Seven and studied for four years. I got a first grade and joined teaching because

my father did not have enough money for secondary school and we were many children," she shares. Wandira was born on October 10, in 1956 to the late Francis Kaggwa and Coneria Kaggwa. She has 14 siblings.

HOW SHE MADE IT

To get through school, Wandira has had to sponsor herself. To adequately cater for her needs, she branched into farming. She adds that the teamwork from her colleagues at the PTC made her journey easier.