



HANDS-ON

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES FOR JOB CREATION

Synonymous with crime, floods and school dropouts, Bwaise, a Kampala slum is experiencing a new dawn through Bwaise Business and Vocational Institute that is equipping former dropouts with skills

FROM COVER

"In the process of working there, I spotted a section that had few workers but who were highly paid; the tailoring section," he says.

However, he did not have the finances to enable him get these skills he so much wanted, but an opportunity presented itself once more.

"I was introduced by my former teacher to this institute, and when I applied, I was taken in on a scholarship for this year's intake. I will be doing tailoring and fashion design. After the course, I plan to engage my employer on employing me in the tailoring section of the workshop," says an optimistic Kibuuka.

Changing lives

Muhammed Kisirisa, the chief executive officer of Action for Fundamental Change and Development (AFFCAD), a community-based organisation in Mukalazi Zone, Bwaise explains that Bwaise Business and Vocational Institute, started in 2013 with the idea of empowering young people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged, have not been to school and those engaged in petty crime and indecent jobs such as sex work and gambling.

"We wanted to provide spaces for young people aged between 16 and 27 years living in Bwaise. To engage them in different vocational programmes plus give them entrepreneurial and life skills," he says.

The institute offers seven vocational programmes; cookery and bakery, ushering, and decoration, tailoring and fashion design, computer graphics, electrical installation, beauty therapy and photography, and video. These run for six months and are open to anyone regardless of their education level. The institution is also registered with the Directorate of Industrial Training which awards certificates to trainees after the course.

"Students are to pay Shs1.5m, however, 99 per cent of all our students are on grants from European Union - who are our current partners," Kisirisa says, adding that since their commencement, they have graduated about 2,000 students and have 408 enrolled in their current intake.

"I must say 65 per cent of those people are successful. Twenty five per cent of them have established small businesses, and many of them have



Students of Bwaise Business and Vocational Institute during a lesson at the institute recently while below the students attend a computer class. Most of the students are former school dropouts from disadvantaged families in Bwaise. PHOTOS BY DESIRÉ MIBABAALI

Vocational skills giving hope to Bwaise youth

been retained where they did their internship," says Kisirisa.

Hope to the hopeless

For Sharifah Nabukenya, the skills have been a breath of life in her life that had been riddled with frustration. After Senior Four, Nabukenya stayed home for a long time without any tangible work to do.

"There was no hope for me to continue studying so I was hopeless. However, I heard that AFFCAD was

advertising for an intake, I applied. I chose tailoring and graduated in 2014," she says.

However, she still stayed home because she had no employment. "I had friends who had a tailoring workshop and they would call me for gigs once in a while. However, one day, I got a call from AFFCAD. They told us to calculate all the materials and equipment we needed as startup. After sometime, they brought everything to us. We started this workshop last

VITAL VOICES

Great points



"I got very good points at A-Level (18/20) in 2016, but my parents had no money for tuition. But I desired

to have practical skills so I enrolled for vocational training."

MUFUMBA CLARE - COMPUTER GRAPHICS (STUDENT)

Breakthrough

"I was among the first students who joined the institute in 2014 to study electrical installation and mechanics. I got a job a year later which was a breakthrough for me."



SHAFICS KATUMWA, FORMER STUDENT



year," Nabukenya says, revealing that she now earns, and is able to support her family.

When asked why most beneficiaries were from the Muslim faith, Edward Kulabako Musoke, a social worker at the institute, explains that their community is largely Muslim. "However, the program is open to all people regardless of faith," he said.

He also explained that since primary beneficiaries were Bwaise residents, it explains why many of the beneficiaries' shops and workshops were located around Bwaise. But the hopeless children of Bwaise, skills acquired have become a ray of hope.

408

THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT INTAKE AT BWAISE BUSINESS AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTE