

MultiTech Business School helping students start projects

By Martin Kitubi

A student arrives on a motorcycle with a box of merchandise for the school canteen. She delivers the day's stock and dashes to her morning lecture.

Christine Nassiwa, who is pursuing a diploma in business administration at Multi Tech Business School (MBS) in Kampala, says she almost dropped out of school because her parents could not afford to pay her and her sibling's school fees. Her uncle later came to her rescue.

Two years ago, she started selling chapatis to raise her tuition after being admitted to MBS. She sought permission from the institute's administrators to sell her merchandise to the students. She started her business with sh16,000 in 2015. She bought two packets of wheat flour, cooking oil and charcoal to start off her business.

The school management permitted Nassiwa to sell her snack to fellow students and administrators to boost her market; something that has worked out with time.

From a profit of sh10,000 per week two years ago, she now makes about sh75,000 in profit every week.

Raising capital for young entrepreneurs is still a challenge despite initiatives such as the Youth Livelihood Programme under the gender ministry.

As part of their strategy to promote the innovation and entrepreneurship spirit, MBS has set up a sh10m fund to support their students, according to the principal Dr Hassan Ssendagire.

Nassiwa participated in the competition this semester and won sh750,000, which she plans to re-invest in her business.

"I plan to expand the venture and include packed juice," Nassiwa explains. "I also intend to expand my business to outside catering, specialising in chapatti and juice."

Peninah Kanyange, who is pursuing a bachelors' degree in business administration and management, opted for hairdressing.

In May, Kanyange won sh750,000 in the Venture Capital Competition. She started a barbershop and earns sh14,000 daily.

"I was idle; I depended on relatives for everything, including clothes. I

Start-up capital boosts students' innovations



MultiTech Business School Technical fashion and design students tailoring. Photo by Lawrence Mulondo

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will work hard to see that I do not quit the business," she says.

And so does Ali Mwanga, who is pursuing a diploma in fashion and design. He won sh1.5m in competition and he is poised to set

up a fashion label in town.

Mwanga depends on making shirts, party dresses and office dresses. He also makes pants, crafts furniture and car tyres. He says he makes a profit of about sh300,000 every month.

The fashion students at the institution have also been awarded a contract to make graduation gowns for over 600 graduands slated for January 25 next year.

Business competition

Following a vocational recess term assessment by Multitech Business School, they came up with six major areas, including financial literacy, entrepreneur, computer, marketing and business, ethics and value skills to be integrated in all courses at the institution.

It was established that all the above skills were required to run any business in both the private and civil service sectors and, therefore, were made compulsory to students.

At the end of every semester, Ssendagire says each student was required to identify a business project of their choice and come up with business plans that required less capital, but could be sustained and expanded in big business enterprises.

All the projects that students came up with were subjected to vetting by the school administration and lecturers to determine whether they were viable. "We set up the venture competition with an aim to encourage our students to be innovative and also set up their own business," Ssendagire says.

The institution also set up laboratories for practicals, including fashion and design, catering, beauty and bakeries to serve as incubation centres for youth.

The funds were realised following a partnership with Stick to Uganda Foundation and the school is looking forward to partnering with the Government to operationalise the same at all training institutions.

Unemployment in Uganda

Over the years, youth unemployment in the country has been increasing, with about 400,000 graduate annually.

According to the Uganda Investment Authority, about 150,000 jobs are created annually leaving over 250,000 graduates unemployed.

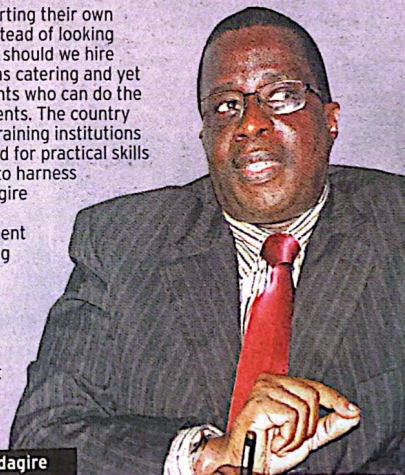
Despite a large pool of unemployed youth, employers continue to search for skilled talents (graduates) to fill the growing number of jobs in the country.

There has also been a qualitative mismatch where people are qualified for certain jobs, but they don't have skills required by employers in the country.

Ssendagire says Capital Venture Competition is meant to support

students in starting their own businesses, instead of looking for jobs. "Why should we hire services such as catering and yet we have students who can do the same assignments. The country will benefit if training institutions realise the need for practical skills and take time to harness them," Ssendagire says.

The Government has been calling for inculcating of vocational skills in the students. This will reduce the unemployment burden in the country.



Hassan Ssendagire