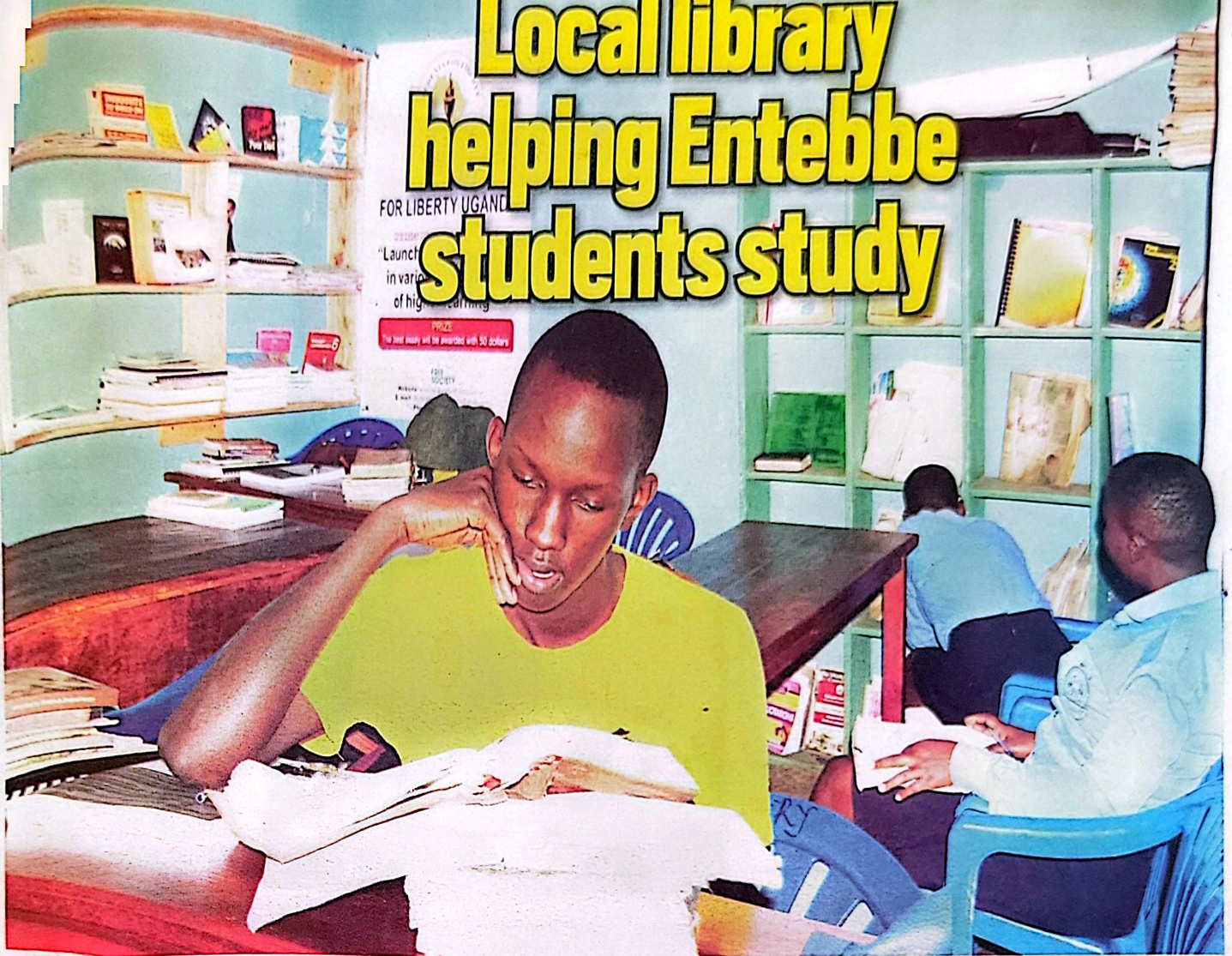


Local library helping Entebbe students study



BY DESIRE MBABAALI
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In most schools that are far from the town centre, students find it hard to revise their books after school. The reasons vary from household chores waiting to be done to lack of a quiet reading space. Betty Nantumbwe, a student at

Entebbe Comprehensive Secondary School, found herself in such a dilemma. "The library at school closes at about 5pm and at home, since we do not have a housemaid, I am supposed to do all the chores and prepare supper. The only chance I get to revise my books is after 11pm when everyone is asleep. Of course, by that time, I am too

tired to read for more than an hour." Saturdays do not bring an opportunity for studying either because the school is only open until 1pm. Entebbe has a public library, but it is located in Entebbe Town, a distance that would cost Nantumbwe Shs1,000 by taxi. In April 2017, John Mugabi, the

chairperson of the academic and disciplinary board of governors of the school opened up a public library, Liberty Library, found a few metres away from the school gate. Within four months, the presence of the library has changed the reading patterns of students in the area.

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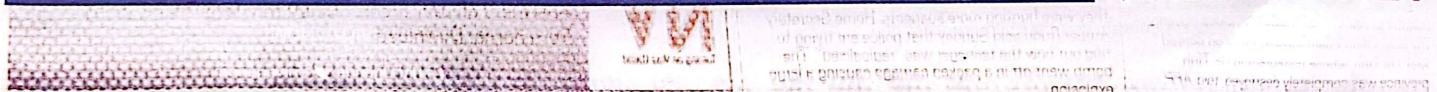
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Expert's thoughts
ROBINSON KUSIMBA LYAZI, DIRECTOR OF BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION,
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

"These community libraries are part of the Social Development in the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, which handles adult education. These libraries are usually used by adults to increase on their literacy. However, it is not wrong to open up a community library, especially if it benefits and is used by students in the community. However, government schools are supposed to have their own functional libraries which students should use."



FROM THE EDITOR



Publish and never forget

To those who hate or fear writing, "publish or perish," may sound familiar and scary. But to those who find it hard to remain in the realm of academics, publishing is something they must live with. University academics are expected to fulfill three roles: teaching, research and community engagement. In this, they are expected to give public talks, make television appearances and write columns in popular media among others. This should not be difficult with the flourishing of online, disciplinary journals, websites, e-magazines — and the wide range of outlets that can come along with them. As a publisher, you can also create a relationship that will result in future opportunities to publish more work. Read more in our story on Page 23

The world is now a global village. The movement of information from one country to another is possible today. Every many people that are on opportunities being a language barrier. Today, the 21st century encourages an international language to give more weight to the week.

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POLICY/PRACTICE ESSENTIALS AND ALTERNATIVE IDEAS

Local library helping Entebbe students study



Students study in Liberty Library in Entebbe. While below John Mugabi, the brain behind the library, shows some of the books they have. PHOTOS BY GILLIAN NANTUME

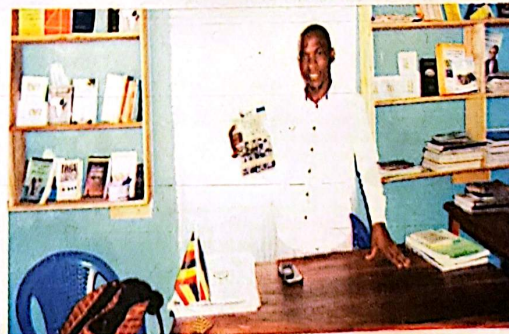
While most schools have their own libraries, many others do not and some are poorly stocked, making it hard for learners to get information for independent research. In this case local individually-run libraries come in handy.

.....FROM COVER

Entebbe Comprehensive is the only secondary school serving the areas of Kitooro, Kiwafu, Lugonjo, Nakiwogo, and Banga in Entebbe.

"Through this library, I aim to promote the culture of reading — beyond text books," Mugabi says, continuing, "I was born in this area and I attended Entebbe Comprehensive Secondary School. I remember that my colleagues and I wanted so much to revise our books that we would walk from Lugonjo to the public library in Entebbe Town. It is a long distance. That memory put a yearning in my heart to bring library services closer to the community."

Mugabi was the guild president of



Kyambogo University from 2013 to 2014. He runs an organisation called Students for Liberty and a community based organisation.

Zein Hamza, a Senior Six student, studying Physics, Economics, and

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THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT VISIT LIBERTY LIBRARY EVERYDAY

Mathematics is one of the students reaping from this innovation. "The library is open seven days a week so I come here every evening after classes. Most of the students in my class also come here because we do not have books on pure mathematics in the school library yet we can find them here. Another important thing is that it is easier to borrow a book if you are a regular."

Students are not charged for using the library which opens at 8am Monday to Sunday. They only have to sign up and let their parents know where they are.

"On average, we have 10 students everyday but on weekends, the numbers go up. We have had to create space behind the building," Mugabi

says, adding, "We have received requests from students in evening classes asking us to open the library at 6am. We have not yet made a decision on that."

Teddy Irene Nakulima, a Senior Five student, says since she started using the library, her grades have improved. "I mainly come here in the evening to read books on Geography (paper three) which we do not have in the school library. I look forward to coming here during the holidays because the school does not allow us on the premises during that time."

Mugabi hopes that if the students are encouraged to read widely, they can create a forum where their ideas for transforming the community can be discussed. But first, their minds have to change towards reading. He plans to organise debates and discussions to establish the culture of reading in this community."

WHAT THE STUDENTS SAY



"We have a library at school but most of the books are for O-Level. We are allowed to borrow books. This library helped us because even our teachers are always encouraging us to do more independent research."

FIBBY AIYIO, SENIOR FIVE STUDENT



"I mainly come here in the evenings to read books on Geography (paper three) which we do not have in the school library. I even come here during the holidays because the school does not allow us on the premises during that time."

TEDDY IRENE NAKULIMA, A SENIOR FIVE STUDENT



"I come to read every evening after classes. Most of the students in my class also come here because we do not have books on pure mathematics in the school library yet we can find them here."

ZEIN HAMZA, A SENIOR SIX STUDENT