



## HANDS-ON

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVES FOR JOB CREATION

# Vocational training fast becoming a necessity

It is increasingly becoming important for every graduate to gain a skill to make them innovative, versatile job creators thus changing the face of vocational training, writes **Gillian Nantume**.

Every day, employers struggle with a shortage of skilled manpower. The graduates roaming the streets are many, but those with experience in their professions are few. And with increase in the number of factories and organisations opening up, there is need for a skilled workforce.

Shillingi Mwesigye, the principal Lugogo Vocational Training Institute (LVTI), says because of the giant strides of vocational training, factories no longer need apprentices. "Traditionally, every factory had its own apprentices, who could learn on the job. The factory would eventually pay for the apprentices to return to school. But the practice is dying out because vocational institutions are churning out skilled and qualified artisans. If factories get such workers, why would they still hire apprentices?"

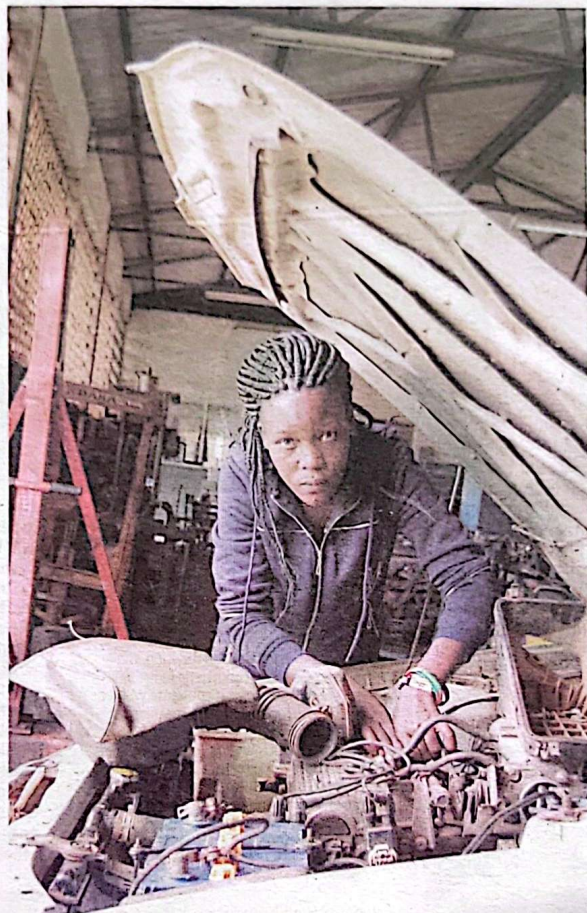
## 30,180

NUMBER OF STUDENTS  
ENROLMENT IN TECHNICAL  
COURSES IN 2017

Currently, people with technical skills who can work on practical jobs are few. If you advertise a job slot of 15 people with technical skills, chances are that after screening, you will only get 10.

"It has been a slow process, but now people are beginning to see the benefit of vocational training," Mwesigye says, continuing, "At LVTI, university graduates leave their offices and come for evening classes. This is because the workplace requirements have changed, to favour those who have incorporated non-formal training in their education."

It is no longer a shame for university graduates to apply to study technical courses at vocational institutions. As a transport officer, one needs basic knowledge about how a car operates or the names of the different car parts. In the same vein, an estates manager needs some basic knowledge about carpentry, plumbing and electrical



there are professional artisans who have never been to school.

"Through the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), the Ministry of Education and Sports found that a disservice had been done to the artisans in Katwe. They are good mechanics who know their job well, but they have never been to school. The DIT decided to assist them to compete in the field on the same footing as those who have been to school, because in any competition you need a certificate. So the DIT offers them a pass certificate which can be used in the East African region."

Non-formal training is non-discriminatory. With the government initiative to boost vocational training, it is believed that the problem of unemployment can be reduced.

A student learning how to repair a car at Nakawa Vocational Institute in Kampala. PHOTOS BY GILLIAN NANTUME

## VITAL VOICES

Anyone can take on vocational training



I want to gain skills that can enable me to begin working immediately so that I can get money to raise me to another

educational level. Already, I have started working because I have enough experience. If I perform well in vocational training, then entering the university will not be difficult.

**CHARLES NAALO, STUDENT, ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING**

People used to say that those who go to vocational training institutions are failures. I scored 15 points



in Senior Six but my parents could not afford university. I admire those who are already working and making money. The easiest way to be like them is to study a practical course.

**IVAN ISABIRYE, STUDENT, ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION**

## QUOTE

"A few years ago, all a company driver needed was a driving permit. Today, no one will employ a driver who does not have a craft certificate showing he can carry out minor repairs on a car, in case it got a problem. You find a transport officer, who graduated in Social Sciences, being confused by drivers who demand for funds to buy the same spare part – which they give a different name in different requisition forms."

**SHILLINGI MWESIGYE, PRINCIPAL LUGOGO VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE**



Compared to the earlier years, the tools we use make studying carpentry much easier. We use combined

surface and thickness planer, tenoning machine, and cross cut saws. We do not expend a lot of energy as we work. However, those in the villages still use hand and bow saws, and hand planes.

**RONALD EYEP, STUDENT, CARPENTRY**

## LIFE SKILLS

## Going beyond carpentry



BY GILLIAN NANTUME  
gnantume@ug.nationmedia.com

From the time when he was still in primary school, Matia Kasirye knew the profession he wanted to pursue in life – carpentry. "In 2010, when I joined a technical institute in Masanafu, I was advised to spend a week visiting all the classes before I settled down on the course of my choice. So I went to the hairdressing, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical classes. However, my love for carpentry remained. It was easy for me to learn because I had the passion for it."

After graduation, Kasirye was retained as a worker by the institute for two years. "I was only working while using carpentry machines. I discovered that whenever I got a contract off-site, I found it hard to work because the contractors did not have the machines that the institutes had. I found that working with machines alone was putting me at a disadvantage."

With his savings, Kasirye opened up a workshop in his family's compound in 2012. "I can invent a furniture style and it for a customer. Also, I can at a design or picture and cut. Most of my clients visit furniture shops around town and take pictures of the furniture they made using wood."

Currently, Kasirye operates a furniture shop in Namungu. He buys the timber he uses, cuts and treats it before ferrying it to his shop. "I can make anything I want. I have from this: include taking care of it and buying a plot of land."