BUDO'S KAZIBWE TO RETIRE AFTER 33 YEARS

By John Musenze

When Canon John Fred Kazibwe walks out of the gates of King's College Budo on March 15, it will close a 33-year career.

In his teaching career, Kazibwe has led two top traditional schools of Uganda – King's College Budo and Mengo Senior School.

PHOTOS BY JOAN NABASIRYE



Kazibwe will walk out of the King's College Budo gates after a four-year tenure on March 15. He started teaching in 1993

TRANSFORMING MENGO SS

Kazibwe says when he became the headteacher of Mengo SS, he prioritised fixing the challenges he had seen as a teacher and a student.

"The biggest problem we had was that of our students loitering around Kampala. You could not pass in Kampala without finding a student of Mengo, so we fenced the whole school and our students would be in all day. Today you can't find a student of Mengo loitering around. We also wanted our parents to be accountable to their students, so I introduced the thumb clock-in and clock-out, whereby a parent instantly receives a message when their children are at school," he said.

Kazibwe noted that throughout his career, in his management, no teacher skipped a lesson, and the few cases that did it were heavily punished.

QUALITY EDUCATION

According to Kazibwe, traditional institutions like Mengo SS, King's College Budoa and Gayaza High School were used to low numbers, something he said locked out many Ugandans who sought good education.

"You would find a biology class with just 20 students; for me, that was a disservice to the country. I opened doors for major sciences, and if you look at the university entries, Mengo and Budo had/have it big," he noted.

Kazibwe highlighted that because of this, parents trusted them and paid school fees, which he has used to change infrastructure not just in Mengo, but in Budo.

"My career dream has been to actually fulfil it so that when a child leaves my class and goes to a school in the US, there's 90% or even 100% similarity, not to begin at zero."

A WORD TO GOVERNMENT

According to Kazibwe, the best way to improve Uganda's education is through accountability.

"The Government should put emphasis on inspection of every employee in the sector. The education sector needs three things: planning, implementation and monitoring. When you do that, you get results. Even when I travel to the US, I am able to monitor every class," he said.

He explains that throughout his career, he has not used any loans to develop the school right from Mengo and currently Buddo.

WHO IS CANON JOHN FRED KAZIBWE?

Kazibwe was born at Namirembe Hospital to two teachers, Michael Fred Kyeyune and Erina Nababi Kyeyune of Ssempa village in Katikamu sub-county, Luwero district. He attended Ssempa Primary School, where both of his parents were teaching.

Kazibwe later proceeded to Mengo Senior School and Caltec Academy in Kampala before joining Makerere University for a bachelor of arts degree, majoring in arts and economics. He returned to Makerere and pursued a post-graduate diploma in education.

After his diploma, he joined Mengo Senior School as a teacher in 1993. After two years, he went to the US to pursue a master of science in management for four years. Unlike many people who choose to remain in the US after studies, Kazibwe returned to Mengo SS to teach.

"When I came back in 1999, I was made the deputy headteacher at Mengo SS, a period that also brought me closer to heads of schools and good mentorship," Kazibwe said.

In 2007, he was appointed as the deputy headteacher of King's College Budo. In 2011, he was posted to Mengo SS as a headteacher until November 7, 2021 when he was posted back to King's College Budo this time as the headteacher.

Kazibwe is married to Dr Ann Nalunkuuma Kazibwe and they have three children.



Kazibwe in-front of a new classroom block under construction

PROUD MOMENTS IN HIS CAREER

As he leaves Budo, Kazibwe says he is proud of the lives he has touched through education.

"The normal things, like building new infrastructure, can be done by anyone, but creating a mark on someone's life humbles me. I came in at Mengo when we had 1,782 students; I left when we had 4,850. The number tripled, but also the new buildings sprung up and grades also improved. At Budo, I found 1,780 students; I am leaving them at 2,600. By the grace of God, my name will be here for more than 100 years. I left Mengo with no loan; I am leaving King's without a loan," he noted.

Kazibwe added that for more than 100 years, Budo had a water problem, but now they have set up a 150,000-litre water tank and the school has a surplus.

He has also constructed a 32-class block to accommodate the growing numbers, built two modern dormitories and started on sh12b chapel project. So far, over sh1b has been collected and work has started.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

Just like any achiever, Kazibwe noted that the biggest challenge he has had is land grabbing.

"We have been to court and some cases are even life-threatening. Sometimes these are 'big people' that even turn the hatred to me as an individual, not the school. We want to use this opportunity to thank the Kabaka for renewing the King's College Budo lease for another 100 years. My biggest regrets are not giving a vacancy to a child. Even when I am seated somewhere, those memories often come back," he said.

Kazibwe says the best moment in career was when Kabaka Ronald Mutebi visited Mengo SS at a time he was its headteacher and the worst was seeing students not being admitted.

"The reason why we do not admit them is that we can't accommodate everyone," Kazibwe noted.

TO THE PARENTS

He advised parents never to drop children's dreams just because a school has not admitted them.

"If a child wants to do sciences and Budo declines, do not force the child to do arts for the sake of being admitted. Look for a school elsewhere; let the child do sciences."

He, however, cautioned parents to look for schools where teacher focus on raising all-round students.

Kazibwe noted that starting March 15, he will take some time off to rest.

HIS GRATITUDE

As he bows out he is profoundly grateful to the Kabaka of Buganda, the Government of Uganda and the Church of Uganda for the support they have given him throughout his teaching career.

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Jimmy Katende, chairman of the board of governors at Kings College Budo: The school got facelift despite the short time he has been here. He likes development and we are going to miss him. As the board, we will miss him, but we pray maybe he can come back and play another role.

Godfrey Kasamba, deputy headteacher of King's College Budo: I served here for 30 years and I worked with him. The Budo he found was best known for having old structures. He is results-oriented and has instilled that in the staff members. When he came in, the first thing he did was to double the teachers' salaries.

Justine Nansubuga, an old student: Budo looks new and fresh. He revived it. As an old student, I feel good that my school still shines but also looks like the schools I have been to abroad.

Rev. Abraham Nkata Kato, the chaplain of Kings College Buddo: He likes God. He has impacted every student spiritually. I have known him to be tough, but a loving person. He is leaving a big project for the construction of the chapel, and we ask God to bless his new beginnings.