

Employ your skills to earn an extra coin

A creative and business oriented mind will always seek an opportunity in every situation – everyone becomes a would-be customer. The fact that one is still in school should not kill the spirit of entrepreneurship. Your immediate surroundings and people are all opportunities to you as a student, to explore – business wise.

BY DESIRE MBABAALI
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“For some time, I stayed with my aunty who owned a salon. That is how I learned to plait other people's hair. When I got to campus, I did exactly that – plait hair. I remember my roommate was my first customer,” Stella Nanyondo, a hair dresser says. “She was hesitant at first, because she did not know what to expect, but she liked my work after. So, she started advertising my works and before I knew it, I had gigs every weekend. Actually many people whose hair I plaited while at the institute are still my customers.”

Although she graduated with a diploma in nursery teaching from Mirembe Girl's Vocational Training Center in Zana, she followed her passion and is currently a saloon owner.

She is not alone.

Having learnt how to make jewelry from her mother in 2011, Catherine Amia also tried it out in high school – making armlets and lockets for her fellow students, at a low cost of Shs1,000 – Shs2,000.

She later resumed the art in her first year at Makerere University.

“Starting with Shs50,000, which were savings from my volunteering allowances at Kawempe Youth Center (KYC), I bought materials; beads, pearls, crystals, threads and other materials for my products,” she says. With her customers predominately being colleagues at KYC and course mates at university, she always carried an extra bag where she kept her jewelry. Earrings, bangles, armlets, necklaces, beaded bags,

clutches and rings are some of the products Amia makes. These go for between Shs3,000 and Shs60,000.

“I considered doing this because I needed something to give me an extra coin on a day to day basis. Using one of the skills I had was an option. It was also something I could do in my own time, since I am an evening student,” she says.

Amia further points out that the proceeds from her jewelry business are used to fund her transport as well other petty expenses like buying handouts, photocopying at university.

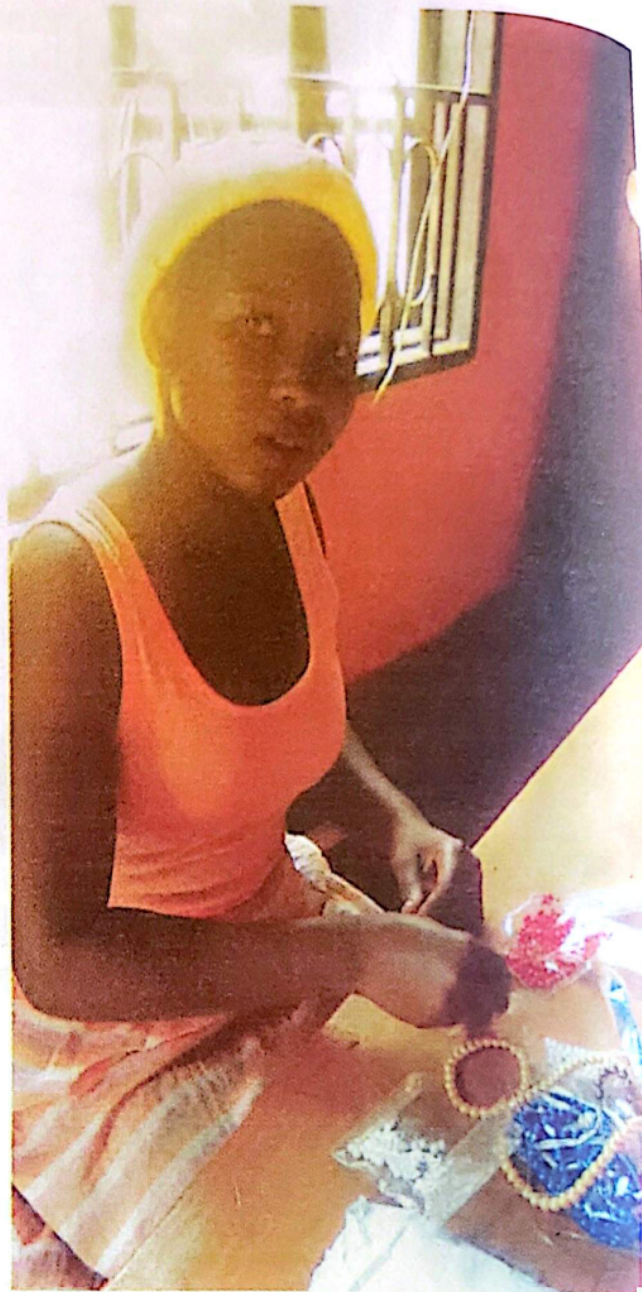
“This, however, is also a challenge at the same time since I at times use the money meant to be reinvested to meet my needs,” she points out.

She believes that she will continue doing this even after school, as it is not only among the few things she has grown to like, but also, it does not require a lot of capital.

Nevertheless, Amia is just one of the few students that have benefited from their entrepreneurial ventures while at school.

“I used to work at my mother's shop in my Senior Six vacation, with a promise that I would get my pay when I was going to join university. When that time came, my mother gave me Shs250,000 as a balance of my payment after I had done all school shopping. What came to mind were questions of; what was I going to do with this money, and what could I use it for to give me profit,” Hamidah Najjuuko, a student at IUIU Girl's campus Kabojja shares her story.

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Amia says proceeds from her jewelry business are used to fund her transport as well buy handouts at university. PHOTO BY DESIRE MBABAALI

MARTHA'S PROMINENT STUDENTS



All students at the school are residents, and so the food business is really big. But since I could not do it myself, I partnered with one of the restaurant owners. I invest money, and every week I get a portion of the proceeds.

PHIONA BABAYAMIRA,
BUTABIKA SCHOOL OF PSYCHIATRIC
NURSING



I normally go to school with homern peanut butter, which students really usually have students pre-order so deliver their orders when I return. With the money, I am able to survive for weeks.

MOSES MULINDWA,
BUTABIKA SCHOOL OF PSYCHIATRIC
NURSING

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COST OF A BEADED NECKLACE IN SHILLINGS