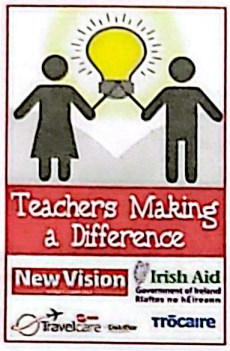
FEATURE

Kasiisa improves education in Iganga

Every Wednesday and Thursday *New Vision* profiles some of Uganda's Teachers Making a Difference. The 12 most innovative teachers will share a cash prize of sh18m and the five most outstanding will go for a week-long all-expenses paid study tour to Ireland courtesy of New Vision, Irish Embassy in Uganda, Trocaire and Simba Travelcare, one of Uganda's leading tour and travel management companies. Today, **George Bita** brings you the story of **Dr Fred Kasiisa**, the headteacher of Iganga Boys Boarding Primary School



Kasiisa decorates a student leader during a swearing-in -ceremony for prefects. Photo by George Bita



When Dr Fred Kasiisa became the headteacher of Iganga Boys Boarding Primary School, he mobilised safe water and a bus for pupils. Aware of the dangers of unsafe water, parents were mobilised to fund a multi-million water purification plant for the school.

"Currently, water from the taps has to be channelled through the purifier system. So, at whatever point a child draws water, it is almost 100% safe for drinking," Kasiisa notes.

Simon Kitansenge, the deputy headteacher adds that Kasiisa also rallied parents to fund the purchase of a 64-seater bus to ease transport for the children as well as cater for educative tours.

"Exposure is one of the vital ingredients in the learning process. With our own bus we can go places and keep our pupils abreast with national happenings," Kitansenge said.

Julius Wandera, the East Africa Affairs minister argues that it is some of these arrangements that prompted him to send his child to Iganga Boys."Instead of following the contemporary trend of seeking city-based schools, I opted for Iganga Boys.

I usually get time off my busy schedule to visit and I am impressed as the headmaster has good deeds to his name," Wandera says.

Fencing school

Before he took over as headmaster in 1993, the school had been threatened by encroachers with an unofficial roadway dividing the institute premises into two.

However, Kasiisa, with assistance from the Police, kicked the encroachers off the school grounds, closed the road, put up a fence and academic performance has improved over the years.

Abdullah Balunywa, the Bulamagi LC3 chairman, reveals that the fence saved children from dangers of missing classes, lack of concentration and potential car accidents.

According to Baker Kasadhakawo, the Iganga district education officer, Iganga Boys put the local government on the national map with superb Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results year after year.

Infrastructure

"Iganga Boys School is one of the few institutions in Iganga district with a tarmac stretch right up to the school's parking lot. Kasiisa ensured this came to pass to save learners from dust," says Balunywa.

"The tarmac has helped our children live in a dirt-free environment. This is something we need to give Kasiisa credit for," he adds.

Kitansenge says the Lark Tower housing the administration block and library are another development to be proud of.

"The double-storeyed building not only gave teachers ample space in a new spacious staffroom but also a library. The pupils can now sit down on their own to read a wide range of available reference books," he reveals.

Kitansenge argues that this exposure to lots of literature breeds a good reading culture as well as preparing the candidates well for the national examinations.

Co-curricular input

A team of 14 scouts from Iganga Boys left for Arusha, Tanzania last December to represent Iganga district at an international jamboree.

According to Michael Chemeli, the teacher who led the team, the one-week event involved competitions in a number of activities.

"At the Arusha camp, we showcased our prowess in setting up tents, lighting camp fires, entertainment through songs and giving first aid response. We did our best with support from the school administration and emerged third best overall," Chemeli discloses. He said the entire exercise was in line with showing preparedness of the scouts as per their motto 'Be prepared'.

Kasadhakawo observes that the scouts represented not only the school, but the entire Iganga local government at the international event.

Kitansenge notes that the school participates in several other co-curricular activities like football, drama and music fetes.

"Every year we have an annual sports day graced by parents and other invited guests. This has enabled learners attain an all-round education," he emphasises.

Kasiisa says the funds got from government have a fraction meant to cater for co-curricular activities which the school puts into practice.

"We are equally thankful to our parents who contribute more funds under Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) to boost school coffers. The children are often given an opportunity to polish their sporting skills as a result," he says.

Community benefits

Rev. James Casio, the school chaplain, says Kasiisa is a blessing to the community that keeps benefiting from the institute.

"The school's two boreholes serve our neighbours with water. Little wonder that locals deemed it necessary to make Kasiisa the Buwolya village LCI chairman," Casio suggests.

Rt. Rev. Patrick Wakula, the bishop of Central Busoga Diocese explains that Kasiisa is the head of laity in the entire diocese covering eight archdeaconries.

"He is a good mobiliser and brings together Christians in the diocese," Wakula says. He notes that as a Christian in a church-founded school, Kasiisa is best placed to inculcate good religious virtues in the children.

Other achievements

Whereas primary school teachers usually have Teacher Training College certificates, Kasiisa, ensured his trainees get degrees.

Leading by example, the headteacher also the elected area LC1 chairman, furthered his studies gradually until he earned a PhD in January 2018.

Kitansenge says for the last 26 years when Kasiisa has been in charge, 18 staff members have been supported to enrol for university studies.

"He solicits for them study leaves and ensures they have Parents Teachers Association (PTA) fund boost to undergo training. This initiative makes our teachers more competent to educate pupils to pass," Kitansenge asserts.

He adds that the PLE performance has been commendable with the annual celebrations of success graced by parents of achievers.

Records showed that in 1993, the school had only 54 candidates of which 50 passed in division one generating a 93% pass.

"The numbers of candidates sitting PLE has kept rising with 103 in 2016. I am sure this is evidence of continued confidence by parents as a result of Kasiisa's determination to deliver," he says.

Ida Balina, chairperson of the school management committee, said the headteacher had managed to sustain Iganga Boys' good performance for the time he has been around.

"In 2000 for example, we registered a 100% pass for PLE candidates. That was a commendable achievement for us and we were very excited," Kitansenge said.

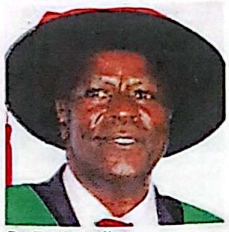
Do you know of an exceptional teacher in a Ugandan school? Nominate them for recognition. Send your nomination and their contacts by August 31, by email to *mwalimu@newvision.co.ug* or sms to 8338 (type TEACHER space and reason and their contact). Winners will be announced in October.

Who is Kasiisa?

- Kasiisa attended Namutumba Primary School over 50 years ago. He then proceeded to Jinja Senior Secondary School for his O' level education.
- After that, he enrolled for teacher training at Bishop Willis Core PTC before going for further studies at National Teachers College, Kaliro.
- In 2001, Kasiisa graduated with a bachelors degree in education from Makerere University. He returned to the Ivory Tower to earn his master's degree in 2007.
- In 2009, he enrolled at Livingstone University, Zambia for a post-graduate diploma in Human Resources.
- In 2018, he earned a Doctors of Philosophy (PhD) from Makerere University.

GOLDEN TIPS

- **A teacher's pride is in the learner's success**
- **Keep flying as high as a lark**
- **Achievers put God first in all their works**



Dr Fred Kasiisa

VIEWS

Jacob Amuru, the school's head prefect,
Our headmaster takes on a fatherly role in school. It is common to see him counselling pupils and also helping them with class work which endears us to him.

Justin Kiyimba, school management committee
We are impressed by the innovative trends Kasiisa has employed while running the school. No wonder every year the PLE performance is excellent.

Suzan Nakibande, parent
The headteacher has improved the fortunes of Iganga Boys. This has made many of us like to be associated with the school that has moulded our children into useful citizens of this nation.

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