

Muyingo empties his earnings into the youth, elderly people

By Martin Kitubi

His real name is Miyingo. But it was wrongly registered as Muyingo back at school.

Miyingo means a log used to lock an entrance to a kraal. Like his name's meaning, he has been a source of protection to people who have entered his 'kraal'.

John Chrysostom Muyingo, the state minister for higher education, has not only dug a notable path of his rise from the classroom to Cabinet, but has also instilled discipline, dependability and loyalty in the lives of people who have crossed his path.

He is also the Member of Parliament for Bamunika County, Luwero district, a position he has held since 2011.

Through the Bamunika Constituency Education Fund (BACEF), Muyingo extends support to the poor, elderly, people with disabilities, youth and students in his constituency using his monthly salary and allowances.

"I do not claim any monies from the Government deposited in my account. All of it goes to the projects in my constituency for service delivery," he told *Mwalimu*.

Notably, he recently used the sh150m meant for his personal car, to support the fund.

Muyingo, together with his partners, constructs and renovates markets, mosques and churches. These are the activities he had been facilitating even before he became a Member of Parliament. He has also built and donated a primary and secondary school in the backyard of his late father's home, for the community and church respectively.

Muyingo also owns three secondary schools (Seeta High campuses), two primary schools and a kindergarten. He educates some of the children in these schools and pays for the rest of the children in other schools around the country.

He has various ongoing projects in his constituency aimed at boosting the livelihood of his people. He has also supported several youth projects, including motorcyclists, farmers, investment clubs and construction of latrines in the community.

Over 100 elderly women and men from each sub-county occasionally receive support in form of blankets, kerosene, soap, sugar every after three months from Muyingo for sustainability. As we strolled through



Muyingo (second-left) handing over balls to youth in Busiika, Luwero district. Photos by Martin Kitubi

Why all the commitment

Dr Muyingo says: "Luwero district was affected by the liberation war, many children were rendered homeless, lost their parents and they had abandoned school. Illiteracy rates were high and the district had very few graduates for that matter."

"As a teacher, I introduced the fund to improve education in the area, for bright children and those from disadvantaged families and backgrounds."

The other reason for the education scheme was that while at Kisubi Seminary and Makerere College School in the late 1970s, Muyingo was relying on donations for education and it also prompted him to help the needy.

"Life was hard at Makerere College School. I relied on friends' pocket money, and other scholarly materials for survival. If they had not helped me, I would not have made it."

With support from well-wishers, friends and his earnings, Muyingo remits school fees for all children under the fund directly from the fund's account to schools' accounts.

"Our father had several wives and children. Poverty was all over our faces. Few of my siblings went to school. I was helped by several people to raise school fees and this explains why I have a passion to help people," Muyingo narrates.

Luwero one weekend, we met a 50-year-old Samuel Yiga, a resident of Busiika parish, who narrated the support he has always got from Muyingo.

Yiga sired 46 children. He has been struggling to offer them quality education, till he got help from Muyingo; who has helped educate a good number of them over the years.

"I will never forget Muyingo. He has been a father to my children. I had lost hope and yet my children were performing well in school," Yiga says.

Before Muyingo's intervention, Yiga was paying sh560,000 per term for his son at Luteete Secondary School in Luwero district.



Yiga says Muyingo has helped him educate some of his 46 children

This meant he could only afford to send at least one or two of his children to better secondary schools since savings from his crop harvests



Muyingo handing over blankets to elderly people in Busiika, Luwero district

were meagre.

As of now, two of Yiga's children, a son and a daughter, are in Senior Six and Four at Seeta High (Main Campus) and Gayaza High School respectively courtesy of the fund.

Like these children, Hanifa Nalugwa, a graduate of engineering at Ndejje University in Luwero district, a beneficiary of the fund, says: "I had lost hope of continuing with studies since my parents could not afford to send me to a secondary school till Muyingo paid my school fees."

Education scheme

BENEFICIARIES OF EDUCATION FUND

For any child to benefit from the education scheme, they must have passion for academics, should be disciplined and from a humble background. The fund also prioritises people with disabilities and those born in Luwero district.

Muyingo started the education scheme with an aim to increase the number of graduates and academicians

WHAT OTHERS SAY

Valeria Nakiwala, 61, representative of the elderly in Busiika village: I love Dr Muyingo not because he is the area Member of Parliament, but for the support extended to the elderly.

Abdullah Ssekate, bodaboda rider in Bamunika: I have benefited from several projects by Dr Muyingo. I went for vocational training in Kampirigisa where I attained skills in vehicle mechanics and motor repair. I own a motor garage in the area where several bodaboda riders go for repair and spare parts.

Daniel Sselubide, LCIII chairperson of Kalagala sub-county, Luwero: Dr Muyingo has empowered several youth in education and finance. He has catered for all political parties, without segregation.

in his home district — Luwero. The scheme has since produced close to a thousand graduates in vocational and university education.

Fees and other school requirements are paid for students at different schools in the country from primary to the university level.

With the existence of the students' loan scheme by the Government, Muyingo is optimistic that the number of graduates in his home area will increase. After graduation, Muyingo, through his schools, partners and friends, connects his students to employers.