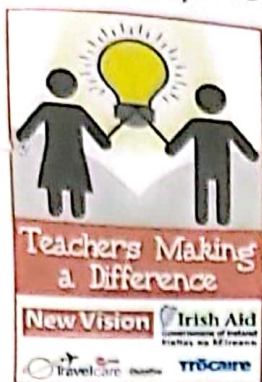


Twikirize says beating scares children, which negatively affects their concentration in class



New Vision in partnership with the Irish Embassy, Travelcare and Trocaire is searching for Uganda's most innovative teachers. Every Wednesday, we shall profile some of the nominated teachers until end of August when a panel of judges shall select the best. A total of top 12 teachers will each win sh1.5m. The five most outstanding teachers will enjoy an all-expenses paid study trip to Ireland early next year. Today, **Abdulkarim Ssengendo** brings you Mathias Twikirize, a teacher who helps pupils make crafts for school fees.

Although he was born in a family of teachers, Mathias Twikirize never admired the teaching profession. Never in his wildest dream did he ever think he would one day become a teacher.

But today, 26-year-old Twikirize has turned into one of the most adorable teachers in Mbarara district, imparting life-long skills to enable pupils not only to survive out of school, but also supplement their fees through making and selling handicrafts.

"We cannot only train pupils to think, they have to learn to use their hands," says the man who once abhorred teaching.

Through hands-on sessions, Twikirize, a teacher at Kabateraine Memorial School in Mbarara, trains his pupils how to make handicrafts, including mats, bags and hats out of straws. Many of the students are already using the money from the craft work to top up on food and fees at school.

"After making and selling the items, some use the money to pay fees. We also give the items out as gifts. The parents have now picked interest and are giving them money to buy straws and other materials to use," reveals Twikirize.

Jessica Atwine, a former pupil, says: "After P7, I started making mats and selling them. Currently, I sell the mats I make, thanks to the training from Twikirize. I expect to help my mother pay some of my fees this year."

Another former student, Joy Mugisa, says she learnt to make baskets. "With crafts, we can make a great living," she says.

"The pupils sell their craft work in the nearby shops and on visitation days at the school. "We encourage



Twikirize with Kabateraine Memorial School pupils during their assembly. Photos by Abdulkarim Ssengendo

Twikirize helps pupils raise fees from crafts

FACT FILE

- Born to Mary Gorrette Bamukwaise and Pidious Kasajja, both teachers and residents of Fort Portal in Kabarole district.
- Attended Kakiwa Primary School, where he completed primary level
- Joined Hapuyo Secondary School for S1 and later changed to Excel Kasubi Kawaala, where he completed O'level.
- He went to St Augustine's Primary Teachers' College and graduated in 2012 as a Grade III teacher.
- He pursued a certificate in counselling and guidance
- Twikirize is currently pursuing a diploma in education at Kyambogo University.
- He has taught in many schools including, Migamba Primary School, Junior Star Primary School Mbarara and Mbarara Central Primary School.

them to make a living out of their innovations. This will make them better youth," Twikirize says.

The other lifeskill Twikirize is imparting into the children is how to play music instruments.

Teaching style

Twikirize, who teaches English language, has left a mark of success



Twikirize teaching pupils how to make crafts

wherever he served. At Star Junior School, he introduced Jolly phonics, a fun and child-centred approach to teaching literacy through sounds, especially for children with speaking difficulties. He also introduced a special class for children who have difficulties in speaking English. With

actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is motivating for both children and teachers.

"We received children from different countries who did not speak English at all. But using Jolly phonics, many have improved and they are

What others say



Mary Francis Kabateraine, school director

Twikirize is a role model. He is a good teacher, who teaches not only with his mind, but also with the heart. He is resourceful, talented and open-minded. He is creative and enjoys teaching."

Benon Musilme, chairperson Parents and Teachers Association

Twikirize is an innovative and creative teacher. He has instilled discipline in children using positive methods. He is a good English and mathematics teacher and has been an asset in handling pupils with special learning needs.

John Bosco Kwikiriza, director of studies

Twikirize is a selfless teacher, who does not only share knowledge with pupils, but also with his colleagues. He has positively contributed to the development of Kabateraine Memorial School.

beating others in debates. They have developed confidence and mastered English spellings," he said.

At Mbarara Central Primary School, he emphasised the handwriting skill and extended it to teachers.

At Kabateraine Memorial, Twikirize introduced positive discipline, where teachers manage the behaviour of children without caning them.

"Caning intimidates children, so when you deliver content, they cannot concentrate," he said.

He also acquired special needs skills and always encourages other teachers to support children living with disabilities.

Supports parents

Twikirize uses all avenues during functions and meetings, to sensitise parents to take their children to school. In his own village, directors of schools normally organise sessions where Twikirize talks to children and their parents during holidays about the advantages of acquiring hands-on skills.

TOP TICK TIP

"Children need vocational skills to survive out of school. We cannot only train pupils to think, they have to learn to use their hands." Twikirize

Do you know of an exceptional teacher in a Ugandan school or institute? Nominate him or her, for recognition in a competition run by New Vision in partnership with the Irish Embassy, Travelcare and Trocaire. Send the nominee's contact and reason for the choice by email to mwalimu@newvision.co.ug or sms to 8338 (Type TOPTEACHERS space, the reason for nomination and their contact). Winners will be announced in October