

Employers want universities to revise internship placement schedules

By Racheal Nabisubi

Universities and other tertiary institutions in the country have been called upon to get for their students internship placements so as to get hands on training. This will equip the students with employable skills. Mubarak Bachu, the national vice-chairman of the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association, said failure by students to get practical trainings through internship is the reason for the small number of skilled graduates.

Bachu was speaking during a Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship Network (YEEN) meeting, recently, at Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) conference hall in Lugogo, Kampala.

The meeting was convened by YEEN and UMA to form a partnership through which they can work on providing places for interns in their industries.

Bachu said universities must revise their internship schedules

for all students to benefit. At the moment, most universities have the same schedules where over 30,000 students are released for internship at the same time.

BETWEEN THE LINES:

Some students do not go for internship while some who go are asked to pay companies that offer them places.

“When universities release up to 30,000 students for internship, they scramble for the few spaces in a few organisations willing to take on interns, yet these do not have space to take more than 20, so where do the rest go?” he asked.

Allan Senyondya, the UMA assistant manager policy, noted that under the Higher Education, Science and Technology (HEST) programme, over 2,000 students from government institutions have got internship placements in

different enterprises.

He noted that internship placement has been the biggest challenge for students, but they will also help those in private universities get placements.

“This will improve equitable access, quality and relevance of skills training and research, which will in turn lead to job creation,” Senyondya said.

A 2015 report from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) showed that there was a total of 6.3 million youths in Uganda, out of whom females constitute 51% of the youth labour force.

It pointed out that the youth unemployment rate in Kampala was thrice the national rate.

It has been observed that many students do not go for internship placements while some are asked to pay the companies offering them internship. It is even not a guarantee that the interns actually get the practical training they went to get.