BEST TEACHERS AWARDED: FIRST LADY

By Martin Kitubi and Nelson Kiva

For the second year running, all 12 best teachers under Vision Group's Teachers Making a Difference (TMD) will get a fully paid trip to Ireland, courtesy of the First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports, Mrs Janet Museveni and the Embassy of Ireland.

The top six teachers will be supported by the Embassy of Ireland in Kampala, while the other six will be catered for by Mrs Museveni, for continuous professional development.

The announcement was made by the First Lady during the awarding ceremony of the 2025 TMD event held at State House, Entebbe, yesterday.

The event was graced by several dignitaries in the education sector, including higher education state minister Dr John Chrysostom Muyingo, primary education state minister Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu, education ministry permanent secretary Dr Kedrace Turyagyenda and Dr Aggrey Kibenge, the permanent secretary at the labour ministry, who is also a Vision Group board member.

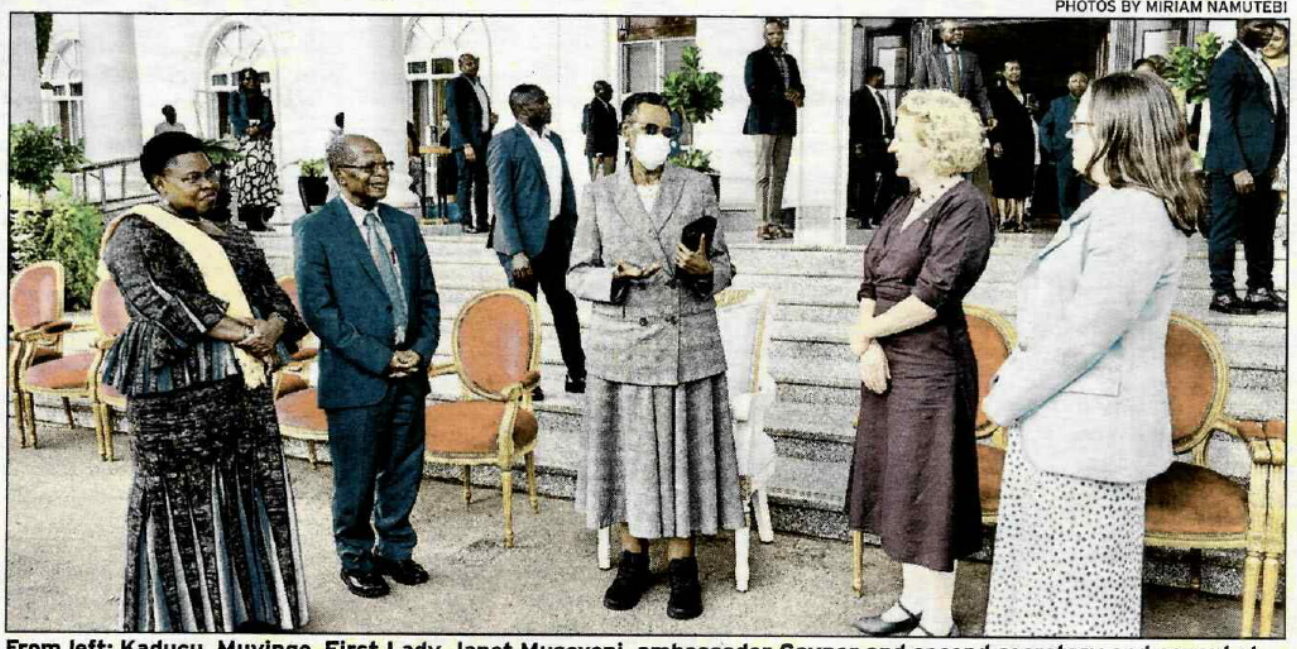
Annually, hundreds of teachers are nominated by the communities across the country based on what they do beyond the normal teaching.

After the nominations, *New Vision* journalists profile them and the activities they do to improve teaching and learning across the country.

Last year, a total of 480 teachers were nominated for the competition. Of these, 60 teachers were profiled and their stories published across the different platforms of Vision Group.

It is from the 60 profiled teachers that the 12 finalists were selected by Vision Group's team of judges.

PHOTOS BY MIRIAM NAMUTEBI



From left: Kaducu, Muyingo, First Lady Janet Museveni, ambassador Gaynor and second secretary and consul at the Irish Embassy Caoimhe O'Hagan. This was after the event at State House Entebbe, yesterday



First Lady (right) hands over a gift to Alice Mary Birungi Baruga, the overall winner



Stella Ejang after receiving her gifts

THE WINNERS

1. Alice Mary Birungi Baruga from Bombo Army Secondary Scho in Luwero district

2. Arafat Ndiwa Chemasuet from Kala Girls Primary School i Amudat district

3. John Bosco Loibok from Karenga Boys Primary School in Karenga district

4. Richard Begura fro Immaculate Heart Gir School in Rukungiri district

5. Tairi Fungaro of Yumbe Primary Schoo in Yumbe district and

6. Aisha Mbeya from Nalubaale Secondary School in Bugiri distric

7. Anna Lomonyang from Kangole Boys Primary School in Napak district

8. Job Afeku from Yoro Primary School.jn Adjumani district

9. Elisa MfitUndinda from Muramba Seed Secondary School in Kisoro district

10. Morris Wamuwaya from Nabumali Boardi Primary School in Mba district

11. Florence Nabasumb from St Peter's Nantabulirwa Primary School in Mukono district

12. Stella Ejang from St Katherine Secondary School in Lira district

FIRST LADY'S MESSAGE

As part of her speech, Mrs Museveni lauded Vision Group and its partners – Embassy of Ireland and Travelcare, a local tour and travel management company owned by an Irish investor – for supporting the project.

The First Lady said study visits to Ireland by the teachers have had a significant impact on both teachers and the education sector at large.

According to Mrs Museveni, the teachers return with enhanced knowledge, skills and global perspectives that enrich classroom practice and school leadership.

She said many of them have gone on to assume higher responsibilities, including positions as deputy headteachers and headteachers, soon after their trip.

"The Ministry of Education and Sports is grateful for this initiative and its contribution to strengthening teacher capacity and leadership in Uganda," Mrs Museveni said.

The First Lady also congratulated *New Vision* upon clocking 40 years (to be celebrated today).

"My sincere appreciation to Your Excellency, the Ambassador of Ireland to Uganda and to your predecessors for leading the way and for your continued partnership, which has since 2017, seen close to over 100 teachers recognised, with 53 participating in invaluable professional development programmes in Ireland," Mrs Museveni said.

According to the First Lady, initiatives, such as TMD speak to the country's vision of transforming the education sector with an aim of improving access and enhancing learning in Uganda.

She said the Universal Primary Education programme alone benefits over 8.5 million learners, while Universal Secondary Education also benefits thousands of learners who may otherwise, have dropped out of school due to the lack of school fees.

"In terms of physical infrastructure, the Government has rehabilitated a number of education institutions and has continued to pursue the policy of, at least one secondary school per sub-county and one primary school per parish," she said.

Commenting about the project, Muyingo said initiatives, such as TMD motivate Ugandan teachers to improve learning.

IRISH ENVOY

Ireland's Ambassador to Uganda, Margaret Gaynor, noted that the best teachers being celebrated are those who go beyond delivering lessons to learners.

"The teachers not only inspire curiosity, but also nurture confidence and support their students to reach their full potential," Gaynor said.

Through their efforts, she said, these teachers are helping to shape the next generation of leaders, innovators and citizens.

Ireland is proud to support this initiative. Over the years, nearly 100 teachers have been recognised nationally through these awards.

"One of the most rewarding parts of the initiative has been the opportunity for some of the award winners and Ministry of Education and Sports officials to visit Ireland for professional learning exchanges, focused on education policy and best practices in Ireland's education system," the Irish Ambassador to Uganda said.

During the visit to Ireland, the team will spend time in schools, meet fellow educators and exchange ideas about education.

The ambassador noted that these exchanges are always inspiring due to the fact that both parties have someth to say about each oth education system and deliv

"In that sense, the Teach Making a Difference initia reflects the wider partners between Uganda and Irela one based on mutual resp and shared learning," Gay said.

According to Ambassador, the supp towards the initiative is par the broader support the Ir people render to Ugand education sector.

Currently, the Embassy Ireland in Kampala contin to pursue its strategy promoting sustaina