

Graduates at all levels will be considered for training at the Graduate Transition Centre. PHOTO/FILE

This is how the Graduate Transition Centre intends to tackle unemployment

In a bid to contribute to efforts geared towards tackling unemployment, Prof Nyeko Pen-Mogi, a renown academician and administrator, has resolved to establish a Graduate Transition Centre that will enable graduates secure employment using the knowledge that they possess.

Whenever students graduate, their parents and society expect them to immediately secure jobs, start earning a living and lead an independent and productive life. However, the reality is that whereas over 700,000 students graduate annually from Ugandan universities, only about 90,000 find formal employment. Graduates often face high competition, forcing them to opt for petty trade to make ends meet, while others continue to languish on poverty, a routine that continues to widen the burden of unemployment in Uganda.

In a bid to contribute to efforts geared towards tackling unemployment, Prof Nyeko Pen-Mogi, a renown academician and administrator, has resolved to establish a Graduate Transition Centre that will enable graduates secure employment using the knowledge that they possess. Prof Nyeko Pen Mogi explains to Daily Monitor's **JANE NAFULA** what the institution intends to achieve:

Talk to us about the Graduate Transition Centre - What is the objective of this institution?

The number of graduates is increasing every year because of the government policy which liberalized education sector. Unfortunately, all students expect to be employed upon graduation but the jobs are fewer than the number of graduates.

So the idea of this transition centre is to help graduates at different levels to transition from academic to the world of work, using the knowledge that they have. You don't have to be a doctor to start a hospital. You don't have to be a vet to start a dairy farm. They need to do something that will bring food on table.



THE CONSIDERATION

We are considering graduates at all levels including Degree, certificate and Diploma holders among others. These days, even nursery children graduate. The Ministry of Education says that universities are going to transit from the knowledge-based education to competence-based training.

How do you plan to make graduates ready for the working world?

We want to partner with industry players. There are people you have been writing about in Seeds of Gold. Some say they were primary school teachers or policemen, who opted for business and transformed their lives.

We can get some of those people to come and talk to these graduates and inspire them in addition to hiring experts to take them through their areas of focus.

The idea is to bring students closer, talk to them hold group discussions on the path they want to take, how to write proposals that can attract funding. We now want to bring these industry players to dialogue with the graduates and help them identify and take advantage of business opportunities that exist in different sectors.

When Wafula Ogutu, Charles Onyango Obbo and others broke away from a certain newspaper, they started the *Daily Monitor* newspaper and they built it into a huge company which now employs more than 200 workers.

How long will the training take and what will it focus on?

The training will take two to three months and will focus mainly on areas of Business Ethics and Marketing, Book Keeping, Business Management and Accountability among others. In most cases, students come to university with a fixed mind of getting a job.

When they fail to get jobs, they do not have alternative thinking of how can use the knowledge to create something, to create a business. So, this is the primary function of this Graduate Transition Centre.

We want graduates to come and be taught basic aspects of business-like managing finances, bookkeeping and many more. If you have sold goods, you should be in position to know how much you injected in the business and the profit you have made.

Talk to us about the Graduate Transition Centre's curriculum for this programme

I have hired curriculum development specialists to design curricular that aligns to the market needs. Facilitators have already been identified and the process of registering student will commence this month. We are looking at 500 students for the start.

Our main centre will be located in Mbuya, Kampala at the premises of Mbuya College School and later we shall spread wings upcountry. But in this case now, the concentration is going to be on the graduates. We now want to transform the graduates from the academic to practical application of their knowledge.

Is this institution only restricted to university graduates?

Not really. We are considering graduates at all levels including Degree, certificate and Diploma holders among others. These days, even nursery children graduate. The Ministry of Education says that universities are going to transit from the knowledge-based education to competence-based training.

Do you think that this shift will help address unemployment among graduates?

Well! It may, but it may not still address because, you see, a university is an academic institution. Whether you want it or not, the university mainly teaches you the theory, the research, giving you an academic knowledge.

That's why you find that many universities started courses such as Entrepreneurship and Development Studies with hope that somebody with the knowledge of Development Studies, can start any form of development.

Somebody with the knowledge of Entrepreneurship may start a business. At the Graduate Transition Centre, we are going to sit with graduates the discuss nothing but business creation. How do you create business with your knowledge? What are the opportunities? For instance, I read in papers about areas in Uganda where business tends to succeed.

Which institutions do you intend to walk the journey?

I need to walk the journey with a number of institutions, and implementors of government programmes and individuals.Im looking Enterprise Uganda, Private Sector Foundation of Uganda, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), the media and those implementing government programmes such as Parish Development Model.

Is there any other information would like to share with the public?

Job seekers are scattered all over the country, use the knowledge you have to put food on the table.

Stop blaming government and universities for not doing enough. Changing your economic status starts with you.

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