

at the institute, the First Lady commissioned a water project that was funded by MMIROR, a non-governmental organisation and further commissioned a 14-seater van that was purchased using funds

Loyce Kusolo, the principal of Jinja School of Nursing and Midwifery, enumerated that the institution faces, which included inadequate staff, tutors not being on government payroll, inadequate infrastructure

hostels for tutors and students, as well as insufficient training equipment used by students during their practical sessions. "Most of the salaries of staff members are paid using local

funds, Kusolo said. She further requested the Government, through the First Lady, for funds to develop the Masese land that was given to

local salaries for other ..

By Gerald Tenywa
and Martin Kitubi

As we set foot in Kisenyi, we were welcomed by the noise of huge hammers banging against metallic materials in the shanty suburb of Kampala City. In this atmosphere of song and clutter, local artisans are hard at work. They mastered the skill of turning many useless materials into useful items, prompting the name, '*magezi ga Baganda*', meaning items made locally.

This is the setting where the journey of plastic waste starts, and ends up in the recycling plant at Kinawataka, located in Nakawa division, Kampala.

About six months ago, Charles Muwonge, 28, started earning from polythene bags. The resident of Kisenyi 1, a slum in Mengo, had failed to get a well-paying job, until he landed on plastic bags.

When *New Vision* visited him at his work place, Muwonge was clad in a dirty overall, heavy duty boots and a stained hat.

At first sight, one would think Muwonge is one of the several other street children who wander around Kisenyi slum. To our surprise, he was the owner of several bags of plastics piled in Kisenyi.

He was resting on a huge pile of polythene, which he had sorted and was awaiting a truck from one of his buyers, to take to a factory.

Kisenyi youth discover lifeline in plastic waste

NEMA COMMENDS RECYCLERS

The work of recyclers has not gone unnoticed.

"We commend the plastic recycling industry," Bob Nuwagira, the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) communication and education officer, said.

Nuwagira said recycling is the best way to manage plastic waste. He, however, said recycling is only doing well with heavy plastics, such as plastic water bottles, jerrycans and basins.

He also said Century bottlers have put up waste collection areas in different parts of the city and such an effort is reducing the disposal of plastic bottles in the

environment and making it easy for the recycling industries.

But that is where the good story ends with plastics, Nuwagira said.

"We have conducted research and we know that recycling for plastic bags is not doing well," he said.

"Getting one kilogramme of plastics is tedious. You have to clean them because they are often dirty, dry and weigh them," he added.

According to a research conducted by NEMA, only 0.05% of the single-use plastics are being collected from the environment.

"There are fewer plastic bottles, basins and jerrycans because they are profitable," he said. "You will, however, encounter many plastic bags out there because they are not profitable," he said.

"The industry does not benefit much yet Ugandans are losing their soil and lakes to contamination by plastic bags."

Nuwagira also said industries claim to recycle plastic bags, but if you analyse their figures, most of what they claim to recycle includes heavy plastics.

He said about 60 plastic plants have been established, but only a few of them have waste recycling plants for plastic bags.

diseases since most of the polythene bags contain faecal matter, yet he uses his bare hands to pick and pack them.

On a bad day, Muwonge collects between 20kg and 30kg of polythene, but can gather up to 100kg in a day.

He mainly collects polythene bags from heaps of garbage and bins situated in several parts of the city.

Often, he is also hired to collect rubbish at functions.

To increase his daily collection, Muwonge also collects plastics from street children. "I buy a kilogramme of polythene bags at sh1,000 and sell them at sh1,300 to dealers from factories," he says.

From his monthly earnings, Muwonge is able to pay his bills.

"I pay sh100,000 for the space where I operate from and sh80,000 for house rent. I love my job since I can earn a living from it," he said.

Muwonge is not alone in the business. Rashid Mutumba, also a resident of Kisenyi, looks for different kinds of plastics, which include plastic water bottles, jerrycans and basins.

Mutumba collects between 50kg and 100kg of plastics every day. Just like Muwonge, he strolls through Kampala, searching for them.

labourer at several hardware and wholesale shops in Nakasero, one of the business spots within Kampala, but he opted out due to little pay.

Muwonge wakes up at 5:00am daily, to start the search for Kampala's most unwanted products.

He strolls through several places within Kampala, such as Mengo,

Rubaga, Kabuusu, Nakasero and the city centre, in search for the bags.

Polythene bags, also known as *buveera*, are used to make synthetic shoes, commonly known as *nigina*.

Muwonge says his dress code helps him to fit into the community where he lives and that eases his work.

His major concern is contracting