

BY VISION REPORTER

APPRENTICESHIP: THE STEPPING STONE TO YOUR CAREER DREAM

When Evelyn Nabiryo turned 16, her parents

introduced her to a relative who owned a day care centre and primary school. Nabiryo had always had a passion for children. She joined the kindergarten section as an apprentice. Within months, she had mastered how to look after children in a day care centre.

She eventually set up her own day care centre and library, which she named Kwagalakwe Day Care Centre, located in Muyenga, a Kampala suburb.

Furniture maker Angelo Ssekitoleko, 30, joined Banda Furniture Makers Savings and Credit Co-operative Society (SACCOS) as an apprentice.

Today, he is an expert in furniture making, thanks to the skills he acquired.

"I acquired many skills as an apprentice. I can now make home and office furniture. And with increasing unique orders from clients, some of whom, bring downloaded pictures of items they want made, my skills will only get better," Ssekitoleko, who is planning on starting his own furniture making and sales business, says.

Nabiryo and Ssekitoleko are just a few of the many people who have used apprenticeship as a stepping stone to their dream careers.

According to Charles Ocici, the executive director of Enterprise Uganda, apprenticeship is an effective way of perfecting skills.

It involves an experienced person mentoring an amateur in a certain working field. Ocici says apprenticeship is common in the labour force, where a senior staff of a particular organisation trains juniors.

However, he is quick to add that apprenticeship in business is meant to equip the



Apprentices learning how to tailor a dress. One does not need high academic qualifications to acquire skills

apprentice with skills to start their own business.

"Yes, at that time, you are working for that person and you are being paid, though some do not get paid. However, the apprentice should be alert from the start that their aim is to learn the dynamics of the trade, with the intention of setting up their own enterprise, not to secure a job," Ocici notes.

WHAT IS APPRENTICESHIP?
 Apprenticeship is the

combination of on-the-job training and the classroom training, wherein the workers earn, while learning the skills required for performing the specialised job.

For apprentices or trainees, most of their training is done while working for an employer, who helps them learn their trade or profession, in exchange for their continued labour for an agreed period after achieving measurable competencies.

WHY APPRENTICESHIP

Goretti Kyeswa, a senior lecturer at Ndejje University, recommends apprenticeship as the best way to attain knowledge and skills that one can use to pursue their desired career path.

"Apprenticeship exposes an

individual to the dynamics of a particular business. It gives the aspiring business person a clear perspective of the business environment in their calling," she says.

She adds that this is necessary for all beginners in any particular career because

they are often not aware of the challenges involved in a particular businesses and how they can be solved without getting loans immediately.

"Apprenticeship is like using other people's mistakes for your own lessons. In the course of the apprenticeship period, one is able to practically learn from different people who have actually got scars, while at work," says Kyeswa.

OTHER ADVANTAGES

Ocici says under apprenticeship, one is able to widen their knowledge base and understanding of not just the business, but the entire industry.

With the necessary guidance from a successful entrepreneur, an apprentice will, therefore, limit the likelihood of enterprise failure when they set out on their own, which is most common at the infant stages.

"This is important because many businesses fail in their infancy because the owners are not aware of the crucial aspects involved in a given business," Ocici explains.

Individual growth, which includes financial literacy and human relations, is also cemented during apprenticeship.

"Working with a person who has been in the business helps you, the aspiring entrepreneur, to establish business networks," he says.

Making the best out of apprenticeship requires the person to focus on learning, more than earning.

"With that, your focus will be geared towards mastering the business environment. That means you will be an excellent entrepreneur," Ocici says.

LIMITATIONS OF APPRENTICESHIP

"To get the best out of apprenticeship, one must cultivate trust. Someone has to be comfortable enough with you, to reveal all the secrets of the trade. But trust, as we all know, is not easily built. It takes a long time for people to trust people. Thus, many aspiring entrepreneurs do not get the best of it, even when they are willing and open to learning," Goretti Kyeswa, a senior

lecturer at Ndejje University, says.

Charles Ocici, the executive director of Enterprise Uganda notes that not many established entrepreneurs in Uganda have time to offer efficient apprenticeship.

"For an apprenticeship to be fruitful, it takes a lot of engagement between the established entrepreneur and the apprentice. Yet, you may find that the entrepreneur has limited time for personal engagement," Ocici says.

He says the other challenge is that because the established entrepreneur is a role model during that programme, the temptation is great for the aspiring entrepreneur to copy the mannerisms of person they are understudying, including their weaknesses.



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PROGRAMMES 2019

Background

Abim Technical institute is among the 5th Technical institution established in Karamoja region in 2009/2010 under presidential pledge, the institute is Government funded and grant Government aided located 15 KM from Abim Business center with beautiful academic environment along Abim -Lira road in Abuk adjacent to Abim CPS.

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The principal, Opiro Joel (MHEMA)