

President urges graduates on govt loan programmes

By Cecilia Okoth

President Yoweri Museveni has urged graduates to embrace the government youth credit programmes to access capital in order to start businesses as part of the solution to unemployment.

Speaking at Makerere University's 69th graduation ceremony on Tuesday, Museveni said unlike scientists who have an easy way out in the job market, arts disciplines have a low job uptake.

Therefore, he assured the graduates of the Government's support through enrolling them in various youth programmes, using low or interest-free loans and grants to start ventures such as maize milling, carpentry and tanning.

For instance, the Government has injected sh126b into the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) fund over the years since it was rolled out in February 2014.

A total of 16,439 youth projects have been implemented across the country, with the Government targeting vulnerable youth groups, such as unemployed graduates, school drop outs, those living in slums, impoverished communities, single parent youth and the disabled.

"If you do not fall in a category which easily gets a job either in Government or the private sector, do not be despondent. You are educated and that is good enough," the President said.

"My plan for you is; what if through the youth programmes, you form groups and we give you capital to tackle demands on the market, such as maize flour, animals feeds and starch?" he said.

Museveni said this will make graduates owners of capital units and subsequently job creators.

"We have already experimented on this and it

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ It is estimated that more than 40,000 young people graduate from Ugandan universities each year, yet the market can only provide 8,000 jobs annually, pausing a serious challenge to the country.

works. I also discovered that Uganda is importing a lot of products — furniture, textiles, animal feeds, paper, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals worth \$5b (annually). We can instead help the educated young people be producers," he added.

Museveni was, however, optimistic that if teaching is done correctly and purposefully, then the graduates will be useful to society.

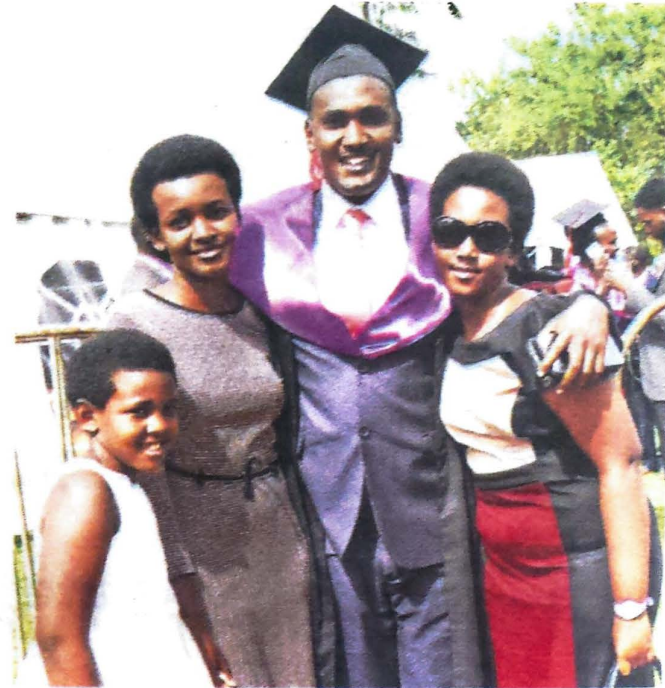
A week ago, Kyambogo University registered the biggest number of graduates in its history with a total of 8,173.

A total of 13,350 students are set to graduate with degrees and diplomas in various disciplines at Makerere University. Of these, 56 will receive PhDs, 1,254 master's degrees and 101 post graduate diplomas. The bulk of the students (11,939) will receive undergraduate diplomas and bachelors degrees.

It is estimated that more than 40,000 young people graduate from Ugandan universities each year, yet the market can only provide 8,000 jobs annually, pausing a serious challenge to the country.

The President urged the academics (social sciences) to engage in relevant research, particularly investigating why Africa, with the exception of Ethiopia, was easy to colonise and how this should be avoided.

"Academics should not only understand the history of Africa, but also the laws of nature; how to tame and manipulate them for the benefit of man," he said.



Information minister Frank Tumwebaze with his family members after graduating with a masters degree in public health at Makerere University on Tuesday. Photo by Mpalanyi Ssentongo