

Ntagali urges graduates to create jobs

By Peninah Nyangoma

The outgoing Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, Stanley Ntagali, has advised graduates to avoid being idlers and instead, put into use the skills and knowledge acquired to create jobs for themselves and others.

Ntagali was on Saturday speaking while presiding over the fifth graduation ceremony of Bbira Vocational Training Institute (BVTI), at the campus premises in Wakiso district.

Ntagali said idleness has killed many Ugandan youth through crime. He was pleased that the institute had equipped the students with reliable skills, which he said, will save them from idleness.

"Most young people become idle after leaving higher institutions of learning; some graduates have degrees but do not have the skills to perform different tasks since they lack vocational skills.

"However, I am happy that you have been equipped with the skills you need to go out and create jobs," Ntagali said.

He further urged the graduates to use what they have earned to open their eyes spiritually, physically and morally, in order



Ntagali (second-left), handing over motor vehicle engineering equipment to one of the top graduates during the ceremony on Saturday, in Wakiso. Photo by Jimmy Outa

to keep shining and to be self-reliant among their peers.

He, however, called on government to tighten the conditions for accessing external labour (*kyeyo*), arguing that many young people who have been taken out of the country under such arrangements, were subjected to inhuman and degrading conditions.

The principal of the institution, Juliet Nankanja, said the institute passed out 320 graduates with certificates in different courses, including

building, construction, automotive mechanics, electrical installation, catering and hotel management.

Other courses were tailoring and fashion designing, wood work technology, plumbing, hairdressing, computer and business.

Nankanja advised the graduates to keep a good heart and to practise the good values that they have got from BVTI, keeping in mind the institute theme of promoting employable vocational skills for the youths

in the world of work.

"Out there, the world of work does not only look at your academic achievement, they also look at the other side. Prove to them that you are from BVTI with various skills," Nankanja advised.

Disadvantaged children

Nankanja also revealed that of the 320 graduates, 180 were orphans and vulnerable children from the war-affected zones in the country.

"As an institute, with the

- Prossy Atimango, a hair dressing/cosmetology graduate, said she was happy and excited because she had not only graduated, but also attained a package that will give her a starting point.
- Mercy Abalo said: "I am so happy that I have made it to this day; I am now willing and ready to upgrade and attain a diploma so that I am well equipped before I can start working."
- The education co-ordinator of Kitgum Diocese Pide Canwat, said what BVTI was doing to help the children from Northern Uganda was remarkable.
- He advised the graduates to be exemplary and to avoid going to the streets upon completion of their courses.
- "This institution has equipped you with enough skills that can help you after here; please use them and show an example to the rest of the students below you," Canwat said.

GRADUATES

help of the Church of Uganda, in partnership with the Directorate of Household and Community Transformation, together with Bread for the World (BftW), decided to support the selected youth from the areas in northern Uganda that were affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebellion, through vocational training," Nankanja said.

The students were given tool kits in their various areas of specialty as an entry point in the work world.

Challenges

Nankanja said as a vocational institution, they are faced with the challenge of unsupportive parents who consider vocational training a course for the uneducated and dull students.

"I would like to encourage parents not to underestimate vocational studies because I believe someone with skills can do a job better than someone with a degree and zero skills," Nankanja noted.