

# Why Uganda needs internship scheme

By Rachel Nablisubi

Zahara Nambooze, a third-year student pursuing a bachelor's degree in psychology at Makerere University, incurred huge expenses travelling from Kampala to Jinja in search of an internship placement.

"I had got the internship placement in Jinja, but I gave it up because I could not afford to cater for my accommodation, lunch and transport," she says.

Nambooze is not alone. Many interns face a number of challenges, ranging from transport costs, meals, health and sometimes accommodation in their quest for placements.

Internship is a position of a student or trainee who works in an organisation in order to gain experience or satisfy requirements for a qualification.

According to Lincoln Kayondo, the Uganda Management Association (UMA) assistant internship placement officer, interns suffer limited funding, theoretical curriculum and absence of an internship policy.

Kayondo notes that the challenges limit their chances of finding internship placements.

In addition to the costs incurred, he says, students lack soft, communication and time management skills. He says they also have poor interpersonal skills.

However, Kayondo says these can be addressed through a sustainability internship programme.

He explains that a sustainability internship programme will motivate and help students acquire skills in how to prepare themselves for work.

Internship sustainability is where interns are given allowances, such as transport, medical, meals and accommodation facilitation to ease execution of their roles.

"Students searching for internship placements are keen to learn and start building their career," Kayondo said, adding that others work extra hard to be retained, become future entrepreneurs and responsible citizens.

Kayondo encouraged companies to take on interns and embrace internship sustainability programmes.

This, he said, can later be used as a criteria of recruitment, which in turn saves time and costs incurred during the recruitment process.

Speaking during a human resource networking dinner at the Uganda Manufacturers Association (UMA) hall

## BETWEEN THE LINES

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recently, Mubarak Nkuru from UMA said internship sustainability will enable the youth acquire placements with ease after gaining relevant skills and knowledge to access the labour market. He added that this will also address the skills gap concerns that industries are facing.

Nkuru noted that industries have continuously reported that graduates are not appropriately prepared.

He said through internship sustainability, the youth will acquire practical experience and mentorship.

"Sixty per cent of graduates cannot find jobs in the labour market. What is the problem?" he asked.

Mager Julia from E4DSOGA said it is expected that interns are not ready to meet market demands, but at times employers are also not ready too.

"Receive interns whenever they show up. This will help in scaling students to ensure that they acquire quality internship through the practical skills," Mager said.

Consulate Ademson, a human resources consultant at Kampala Pharmaceutical Industries (KPI), encouraged institutions to come up with mainstream programmes to help students and graduates acquire basic skills that they can apply in their daily lives to fit in the working environment.

## Lessons from Kenya

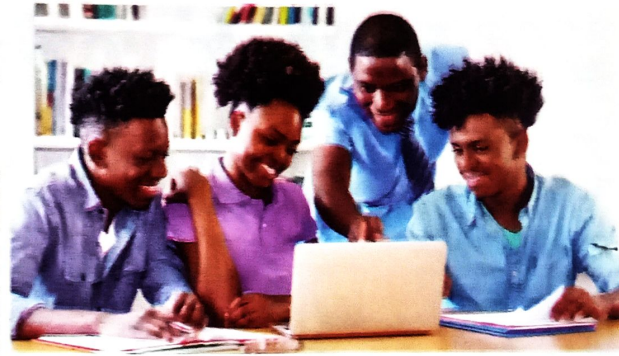
In Kenya, the National Employment Authority Act of 2016 recognises internships and obligates the authority to facilitate placement of students at tertiary institutions in positions of internship or attachment in the public and private sectors during and after completion of their studies.

It also provides steps to be followed by students who wish to be placed on internships, from registering or providing information, to maintenance of records of students seeking internships. The body also monitors internship programmes.

In addition to developing an internship policy, the National Employment Authority Act registers and processes applications for internship, places graduates

into internship; seeks internship opportunities for graduates and facilitates student attachments through partnerships with other stakeholders.

Students need to be supported during their internship so that they are prepared for the job market



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