

MAKERERE STUDENTS AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS BY CHINESE EMBASSY

By Denis Nsubuga

At least 30 students at Makerere University have received scholarships from the Chinese Embassy in Uganda. Dubbed Chinese Ambassador's Scholarship, the scholarships for the academic year 2019/2020 were announced on September 2, at the university's main campus in Kampala.

In 2018, the Chinese Embassy offered scholarships worth sh85m to Makerere University for academically bright, but economically disadvantaged students for their second year at the university.

The embassy has this year allocated sh105m to the same group now in their third year of study. Euzobia Mugisha Baine, the director in charge of gender mainstreaming directorate at Makerere University, said the scholarships will enable the same group to complete their courses.

The directorate co-ordinates the scholarships, which are categorised as the Chinese Ambassador's Scholarship for Excellence (15) and the Chinese Ambassador's Scholarship for Friendship (15).

Baine said the scholarship aims at assisting Ugandans who are economically disadvantaged to access university education.

"It is important because every year, students drop out of university due to lack of fees," she said during the announcement of the scholarship.

The chairperson of the scholarships selection committee, Assoc. Prof. Jessica Aguti, said: "Only a small population of Ugandans access higher education. In fact, statistics in Uganda show that only 6-7% of the children who join Primary One proceed to tertiary institutions. And out of these, not all finish tertiary or university education, because of failure to meet financial costs."

Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, the vice-chancellor of Makerere University, said every year, 1,000 to 1,500 students drop out of Makerere University because they cannot pay the school fees.

"We are honoured as a university that we have friends who lend a hand to our students to enable them complete their studies. They are the future of the country and the continent. The Chinese people are giving us the opportunity to grow with them," he said, adding that the embassy has supported the university in various education endeavours.

Zheng Zhuqiang, the Chinese ambassador to Uganda, congratulated the students upon getting the scholarships and wished them success and prosperity in the future.

Zhuqiang said the embassy and China at large will continue providing support to Uganda's education sector.

Zhuqiang said the number of Ugandan students winning scholarships from the Chinese



Chinese Ambassador to Uganda Zheng Zhuqiang (centre), Prof. Nawangwe (right) and other officials during the awarding ceremony at Makerere University in Kampala, recently. Photos by Denis Nsubuga

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government increased by 59%, from last year.

Representing the education minister, the ministry's undersecretary, Aggrey Kibenge,

said the People's Republic of China has offered Ugandans various scholarships in critical areas of development.

"This will further the country's development agenda, because emphasis is on improving household incomes and lives of Ugandans through industrialisation. There is an important role for strengthened education and training systems in these goals. Development of human capital is regarded as critical," he said.

Representing scholars, Tracy Kituyi thanked the Chinese people for the opportunity.

"The gift of education is more valuable than any other present. It is the sole path to self development, and the door to opportunities that can improve not only ourselves, but also our families and communities. It is a vehicle to a great future," Kituyi said.



Students receiving certificates to confirm their scholarship

WHAT BENEFICIARIES SAY

Loyce Atuheire, a bachelors of adult and community education student

It is a dream come true. I was paying tuition for myself through doing small businesses and part-time jobs. This scholarship helped me concentrate on my books and future. Before I had to struggle to balance the books and raise money.



could not complete the course.

Vanita Agaba, a bachelors of science physical student

It has not been easy throughout my education. I dropped out at one point, but I prayed and I was called for interviews for this scholarship.



Moreen Anana, a bachelors of science in population studies student

The scholarship is a miracle. It has given me the opportunity to improve in my studies. In the first year, my CGPA was bad, but it has improved because I do not have to worry about where the school fees will come from.



Ivan Kirungi, a bachelors of arts in social science student

My guardians could not afford to raise the tuition. I was living on the edge, at times I would miss exams because of lack of fees. The scholarship relieved me of the pressure and I concentrated on my studies.



Thomas Opendu, a bachelors of agriculture and rural innovation student

I have always struggled with school fees, right from primary school. Luckily, I got a scholarship and reached university. I struggled the first year, but this scholarship saved me. Without this scholarship, I was quite sure I



Watikenz Atwine, a bachelors of science in civil engineering student

I was financially constrained and ended up missing my first paper at the university because I did not have tuition. This is very important to my career because I can focus on my books.

