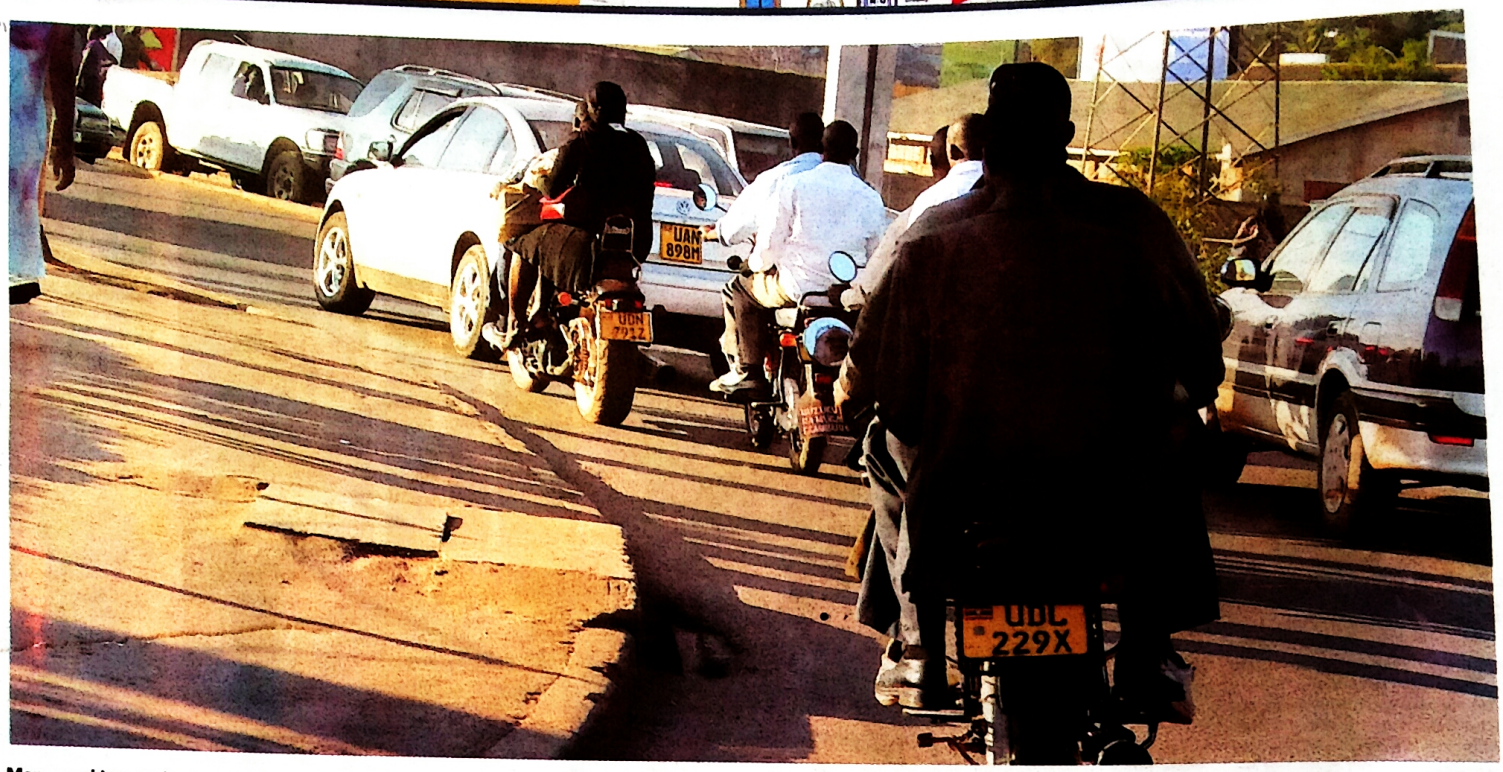
University Guide



Many working students prefer using boda bodas while going for lectures in order to keep time. FILE PHOTO

Studying while working pays off

Adult education. Many universities in Uganda have now introduced courses and study schedules targeting working group.

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While it is possible to work full-time while studying, it can be a bit hectic since both areas need total commitment, consistency and are all important to a person's life.

But with all the expenses associated with higher education and the costs of living rising, working while studying has become a necessity for many people.

Many universities in Uganda have now introduced courses and study schedules targeting the working group who want to continue with studies.

Ms Robina Mbabazi Mulera aka Bina Baby currently works at Dembe FM has gone back to school to complete her bachelors in Journalism and Communication studies specialising in Public Relations at Cavendish University.

With her 10 years' work experience, this would be enough to give her job security but she wants to have a back-up of academic papers.

"I have a job right now, working with Dembe FM but couldn't settle with incomplete papers. There is no guarantee with today's world so I had to go back so that my papers are intact," she said.

Valentine Kataike, an administrator at Makerere University Business School did a master's in Business Administration majoring in projects at MUBS. She says the course itself was practical and gave her an opportunity to relate with what is happening both in the working environment and in class.

Studying while working enabled her build on her network, for example, the course she did connected her to different people.

"I studied with people working in government ministries and private organisations who have helped me in one way or the other," she says.

She says studying while working nurtured her mentally because she realized what is important in her life and what isn't.

"I got to know the right path in my life. At undergraduate level, I was not sure of what I wanted but with a Masters, I was focused and determined to achieve my goals. There was no room for error because every single penny counted as I was paying for myself and besides that, a pass mark at masters was 60 per cent and attaining that needed full concentration."

Kajubi Fred, a second year student at Ndejje University and at the same time the owner of a game store in Kajjansi is grateful for his business because he's able to support himself at university.

"While other people might be working to buy plots of land, I decided to further my studies at campus and so far, the journey is halfway," he says. "Investing in education is the best investment in the whole world because even if my business was to collapse, I could use my papers to find another job."

The Bachelor of Business Computing & Information Management student adds that she not only pays tuition but is able to facilitate his other expenses as well as looking after his siblings because of his jobs where he at least gets shs50,000 to shs70,000.

Challenges

Ms Kataike says inadequate funding is one of the challenges experienced by working students.

"Limited resources was a very big problem for me because the money I used to earn was not enough to support my studies and other utilities so it was really demanding and expensive," she said.

Mr Ismail Dhaka Kigongo, an aspiring Member of Parliament, sports journalist and currently pursuing a Master's in Business Administration at Makerere University Business School, says time management and funds are obstacles to adult education.

"I leave work and go for classes until 10:30pm. For a person who has a family, I go home late, then wake up early to pass through the day," he says. He says raising money for post graduate education is hard compared to other courses yet salaries in most cases stays the same.

According to Mr Kigongo, he spends more than Shs2.6m per semester which expenses such as library, printing coursework and tuition.

Ms Kataike says there was a time when the course was demanding, for example, a master's in Business Administration is two years where you are supposed to do research at the same time attend classes. Because of the high demand in a short time, some people even fail to graduate.

"And for the married people, sometimes marriage fails if you don't have an understanding partner because you don't have time for your family. Sometimes classes start at 5.30pm to 9.30pm and then engage in discussions to 11pm. Any other person would think you are cheating on them," she says.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Working while studying is so more enjoyable if the course one is pursuing is convenient.

Working while studying can be useful for international students trying to learn the language and culture of their host country.

Working while studying should depend on the programme or course the student is pursuing.