

Skills Development Facility

Daily Monitor
www.monitor.co.ug

Promote skills for job creation

Skilling programme grooms interns into entrepreneurs

Selection. Skills training initiatives to be supported are selected through a competitive process based on the merit and labour market relevance of the initiative.

ERONIE KAMUKAMA
ekamukama@ug.nationmedia.com

Skills Development Facility (SDF) has been supporting interns with a focus on short-term, practical, technical and soft skills training. Government received credit from the World Bank towards implementation of an employer-led short term training to address skills imbalances and shortages in Uganda.

Private Sector Foundation Uganda through SDF, has made deliberate efforts to increase intern intake by companies from government and private technical and vocational institutions and 39 companies have been awarded grants to take on 1,200 students from more than 30 training institutions for a period of three months.

About 1,187 interns have completed their internship placement and 112 have been employed in the various companies.

According to Ms Ruth Biyinzika Musoke, the SDF head, with employers such as Kakira Sugar Works, Coffee World, Gudie Leisure Farm, Tetra and Steel and Tube, the project looks at impacting lives of 5,000 people at the end.

Others companies include; Katende Harambe Rural Urban Training Centre, Orchid House Farm, Aloesha Organic, Didas Uniform Makers, Hima Cement, Footstep Furniture Limited, Ssembeguya Estate, Rugando College, Faith School of Beauty, Mpiha Technical Services, Kasolo Foundation, Namulondo Investment, Sky Foods & Beverages Ltd, Action Construction Company Ltd, Blessed Investments Ltd, Didas Uniform Makers Ltd, Kyaterekera Agricultural School Farm, Uganda Cashew Nut And Trees Ltd, Ssembeguya Estates, Agromax(U)Ltd, Jabba Engineering Ltd. Kampala, Jomo Services Limited, Maki Wood Uganda Limited, Sukuma (U)Ltd. Kampala, Muttico Technical Services Ltd, Esmouc Engineering Solutions Ltd, Bafaj Real Design & Engineering Ltd, Farmrite Machinerie and Equipment Ltd, Alinyikira Eco Investments Ltd and Arch Techno Crafts.

Interns are supported with transportation, feeding, learning and demonstration material, insurance, career guidance and soft skills training.

Many have experienced positive and challenging issues along the way prompting an information sharing meeting to devise means of improving the programme. The meeting engagement workshop for grantees organised by Skills Development Facility (SDF) under Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) in Kampala last week also

BENEFICIARIES SHARE EXPERIENCES



"When I left Congo, I did not know how they handle a hoe. I held it in Uganda and dug for someone from morning till 12p.m and they give you Shs3,000. But what made me cry was when I dug for woman and she told me to pick the money after two weeks. Now I earn Shs100,000 a day and I have three employees. Besides that, I am now an assistant instructor in welding," says Ms Jonalise Kabuwo, an intern at Mpiha Technical Services.



"I could get 80 per cent in any exam but had no skill to do anything for myself. I did industrial training but didn't gain much... In training, we were told to test any product we get to compare. So while the products came, I tested them. After five months, I started on my own. In a day, I can make a minimum of Shs30,000. My challenge is people do not believe in manufacturing from a house," says Mr Yusuf Muwonge, an intern at Alinyikira Herbal Company.

aimed at discussing the impact of the program.

In her story of the programme's impact, Ms Jonalise Kabuwo's success is incomplete without SDF in the mix.

This is because it is nearly four years ago since Ms Kabuwo fled Nord Kivu, a province bordering Lake Kivu in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. She arrived in Uganda with next to nothing after the political insecurity in her country left her without parents.

The 18-year-old then soon found a home in Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement in the Western district of Kamwenge but life without a penny to depend on was hard.

"Life was so bad!" she says. "When I left Congo, I did not know how they handle a hoe. I held it in Uganda and dug for someone from morning till 12p.m and they give you Shs3,000. But what made me cry was when I dug for woman and she told me to pick the money after two weeks," Ms Kabuwo narrates her rough start.

Without a relative to turn to, she turned to a vocational centre in the camp where she trained in agriculture. Farming then became her source of livelihood but there were

challenges. Her tomatoes could hardly find a good market.

She then challenged herself to a course in blacksmith welding and now claims to be the only female welder in Rwamwanja Settlement Camp.

Under the project, Ms Kabuwo found an internship placement at Mpiha Technical Services. There she got soft and practical skills in welding because her supervisors were very approachable and focused on ensuring she gets the required training.

She got a business idea too. With

Shs300,000 from charcoal stove sales made during her internship, she rented a house at Shs80,000, bought tools and produced 10 stoves valued at Shs10,000 each.

A contract to make 350 metallic cases came through and she successfully supplied thanks to the business advice from her internship supervisors.

She now regards SDF as her Godparent. "I do not have any relative, they all passed on but that is not a problem. I feel free in my life," she says.

"I earn Shs100,000 a day and I

have three employees. Besides that, I am now an assistant instructor in welding," she says.

At the event, she is not the only one with a success story under SDF. After graduating as a chemist in 2017, Kyambogo University graduate Mr Yusuf Muwonge could hardly do anything hands-on.

"I could get 80 per cent in any exam but had no skill to do anything for myself. I did industrial training but didn't gain much," he admits.

Mr Muwonge found an internship opportunity at Alinyikira Herbal Company, where he could translate his knowledge into skills. The opportunity came along with manufacturing products such as cosmetics and soap, plus a wage and other cash allowances.

"They told us we have limited time (two months) and that we had to learn everything. They brought facilitators, engaged us in manufacturing activities and told us to do something for ourselves after the internship," he says.

Despite the skills acquired under SDF project at Alinyikira, the man in his early twenties searched for a job and his new employer did not hesitate to send him to the company stores. He saw an opportunity although the salary was small.

"In training, we were told to test any product we get to compare. So while the products came, I tested them. After five months, I said no. I have skills, a certificate, let me start on my own," Mr Muwonge says.

He had saved the little cash and in June this year, he manufactured shampoo from his sitting room.

"I bought my chemicals, containers downtown. I bought a mingling stick and started with egg yellow and strawberry shampoo," he explains.

Like any new producer, attracting market was hard but free samples have changed customer attitudes.

Mr Muwonge has since worked with new clients to produce natural hair products such as natural hair shampoo, hair conditioner, leave-in oil, hand wash, black soap, shower gel and liquid detergent.

But this, Mr Muwonge notes, is because of key advice from his internship supervisors to research before manufacturing.

"In a day, I can make a minimum of Shs30,000. My challenge is people do not believe in manufacturing from a house," he says.

However, he is motivated and hopes he can get certification for his products so they are more acceptable to the market.



PRACTICAL SKILLS

Skills Development Facility is part of the Uganda Skills Development Project funded by the world bank and implemented by Private Sector Foundation Uganda on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. It is aimed at supporting employer-led short-term training of prior learning plus increased access to internships for technical and vocational education.

Ms Ruth Biyinzika Musoke, the SDF head speaks at an event. COURTESY PHOTO