

# UMU in crusade for environment protection

By Mathias Mazinga

**U**ganda Martyrs University, Nkozi (UMU) was recently recognised by the United Nations (UN) as a centre of expertise on education for sustainable development in Greater Masaka.

It coordinates environmental sensitisation programmes in the region, which covers Masaka, Lwengo, Kalungu, Sembabule, Kyotera, Butambala and Mpigi districts, among others.

Rev. Bro. Aloysius Byaruhanga, the co-ordinator of the programme, explained how the university attained the status. "As a university, we attach great importance to the protection of the environment. We believe that we do not own this world. We are just custodians and therefore we are always mindful of a clean and safe environment in everything we do," Byaruhanga said adding, "All our academic programmes have a component of environment. Even architecture is looked at from the view

of a safe environment," he said.

Byaruhanga explained why they opted to refer to the faculty as the faculty of the built environment saying it is because of the background that when an opportunity came along, they applied.

He said they were then granted the status on account of their profile and programmes, which were found to be impressive.

Byaruhanga further explained that UMU works with UN agencies like The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), government bodies like The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), other educational institutions and the communities to implement its programmes.

"Our role is to co-ordinate and supervise these programmes. We have centres and partner schools in all these districts. We talk to pupils, students and local communities about the need to save our environment using formal and informal modalities to mobilise our people to be environmentally friendly," Byaruhanga said.



Sister Namutebi and the students from St Augustine's College, Wakiso, displaying the biopesticides made by the students of Uganda Martyrs University during the exhibition last weekend

He added that, "We encourage them to plant trees and educate them about the dangers of deforestation, littering and destructive agricultural practices. We also train teachers, parents and students to protect the environment."

Byaruhanga said in previous years, their agriculture students have showcased impressive innovations like the fireless cooker, the herbal pesticides and standing gardens. Such innovations, especially those that promote the use of renewable energy, will help a great deal in reducing the consumption of wood and the pollution

of the environment.

## UMU's cartoon book

UMU has produced a cartoon handbook, aimed at teaching children about the environment in an entertaining way. The handbook links human beings, nature and God. It was authored by Associate Prof. Julius Mwiine, an environment activist and don. It was launched by the minister of State for Higher Education, Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Musingu, during the university's 23rd graduation ceremony recently.

## Centre of excellence for agro-ecology and livelihood systems

The commitment of UMU as a champion of environmental conservation is also projected by its approval by the World Bank to become the African Centre of Excellence for Agro-Ecology and Livelihood Systems, where researchers from Africa can do doctoral research on agro-ecology. The \$6m World Bank funded project is to develop capacity for Uganda, Eastern and Southern Africa in the area of agro-ecology.

By Vicky Wandawa

**T**he Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) for wildlife and habitat conservation, research and education,

through its Roots and Shoots programme, has done a very tremendous job in educating children on waste management in their schools and surrounding trading centres; and some of them have replicated the knowledge they obtained at their respective homes.

According to Tomas Acridi, JGI's environmental education assistant, Roots & Shoots is a programme designed to educate children about the environment, hygiene and sanitation (including training girls in making re-usable sanitary pads to keep them in school, during their menstrual period) and medicinal gardening.

"Children learn about paper recycling by making noticeboards, paper beads, fibre balls and other crafts out of waste paper and are also encouraged to collect plastic bags used for packing local Waragi/gin and use it for potting tree seedlings in nursery beds. These polythene packets are usually scattered in all trading centres," he explains.

By making use of these polythene packs, they are indirectly cleaning the trading centre, school compound and more so saving the ozone

# Jane Goodall Institute role in beating plastic pollution

**EVERY INDIVIDUAL MATTERS, EVERY INDIVIDUAL HAS A ROLE TO PLAY, AND EVERY INDIVIDUAL CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. TOGETHER WE CAN TURN OUR NEGATIVE ACTIONS AROUND AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS THAT WILL SAVE OUR ENVIRONMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS - JIG slogan**



Chimpanzees at Ngamba Sanctuary

layer, unlike if the packs are collected and burned.

"Our slogan is every individual matters, every individual has a role to play, and every individual can make a difference. Together we can turn our negative actions around and make informed decisions that will save our environment for the benefit of present and future generations."

## History of JGI's 27 years in Uganda

"I am determined my great grandchildren will be able to go to Africa and find

wild great apes." - Dr. Jane Goodall.

This statement briefly presents the raison d'être of JGI for wildlife and habitat conservation, research and education; they exist to reverse the decline in the population of great apes and to preserve their habitats.

Grounded in the legacy of Dr. Jane Goodall's 46 years of chimpanzee research and advocacy, JGI is committed to addressing the complex issues that threaten chimpanzees in the wild, while also meeting the needs of the surrounding communities and affected

stakeholders.

Their primary interest is the conservation of the endangered chimpanzee as well as the welfare of those recovered from captivity. JGI Uganda has been a registered NGO since 1996, but was first involved in Ugandan environmental issues in 1991 during a rescue mission of four chimps that had been stealthily taken out of the country.

## Major achievements and landmarks of JGI-Uganda to date:

■ Establishment of an

ecotourism project in Kibale National Park in 1997, currently one of the leading revenue earners for Uganda Wildlife Authority.

■ Establishment of Ngamba Island Chimpanzee Sanctuary in 1998 which is managed by the Chimpanzee Sanctuary and Wildlife Conservation Trust (CSWCT). It is currently home to 49 orphaned chimpanzees and also undertakes to eliminate the illegal pet trade in chimpanzees in Uganda.

■ Implementation of Snare Removal Programmes in Kibale National Park (1999) and Budongo Forest Reserve (2001). Approximately 25% of chimpanzees in the habituated group have snare related injuries. The Snare Removal Programme employs ex-hunters and local community members to patrol the forest, monitor populations and remove snares.

■ 1999-2003, in collaboration with Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) carried out a country wide survey of chimpanzee populations in Uganda.

■ Establishment of the Pan

African Sanctuary Alliance (2000): PASA is an alliance of 16 primate sanctuaries from all over Africa that is working towards addressing the needs of current sanctuaries and promoting educational initiatives within communities to reduce harmful environmental and hunting practices.

■ Development and delivery of an Environmental Education Teachers Guide for Primary 5, 6 and 7 (2005 ongoing), which integrates environmental education lessons within the Uganda primary schools curriculum. To date 4,303 schools have received 8,927 copies of P.5 and 13,309 copies of P.6/7 Teachers' guides in 11 districts.

■ A coloured book entitled "An ABC to Primates of Uganda" was developed and 20,000 copies were printed and distributed to approximately 2,018 schools in 5 districts.

The JIG has been working in Kampala, Masindi, Hoima, Moyo, Bushenyi, Kasese, Ibanda, Fortportal, Bundibugyo, and Kamwenge districts.