

KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

NEW INFRASTRUCTURE AT KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

If the last time you were at Kyambogo University was two years ago, you will be excused when your jaws drop in marvel at the new infrastructure at the institution.

Kyambogo University and ailing infrastructure have been synonymous with each other since the university was founded.

The university inherited old infrastructure from Uganda Polytechnic Kyambogo (UPK), Uganda National Institute of Special Education (UNISE) and Institute of Teacher Education Kyambogo (ITEK)—the three institutions that were merged to form the university in 2003.

Thanks to the Higher Education Science and Technology (HEST) funded by the African Development Bank (AfDB) and Government of Uganda, the university is undergoing a remarkable transformation.

The new infrastructure constructed at the university are the Central Library with Virtual Capabilities, New

block Engineering Laboratories and Workshops comprising 18 workshops and laboratories, Central Teaching Facilities with a sitting capacity of 3000 students, Technical Teacher Education (TTE) and Capacity improvement Facility and a Central Multipurpose Science Laboratory.

"The new central lecture block which can accommodate 3800 students, and this makes our university looks good," says Charles Okello, the university secretary.

Okello reveals that the new library cost \$2.49m, engineering laboratories and workshops cost \$6.5m, central teaching facilities cost \$5.1m, technical teacher education block's cost was \$7.9m.

The central multipurpose science laboratory was costed at \$2m. These projects were part of \$25.4m project extended to the university and is being managed in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Sports in collaboration.

Equipment for Laboratories, workshops, and lecture

and incubation centre blocks valued at about USD 5.32 million have also been purchased.

"These new facilities greatly transformed the outlook of our university," says the university secretary.

At the official handover of the new buildings to the university in September this year, Jolly Uzamukunda, the assistant commissioner for higher education said the new infrastructure will see a surge in the number of students undertaking science and engineering courses.

"Improvement in space, quality of teaching and quality of service delivery increases the enrolment of students pursuing science and technology courses," she said.

Even some of the existing infrastructure has got a face-lift under this support. Eight blocks of the engineering laboratories and workshops have been renovated. The construction has been completed, and all other

activities are scheduled to end by June 2018.

There has even been an effort to tarmac some of the roads at the university. Paved walkways are also coming to the university.

The HEST project aims to respond to the skills gaps in the human capital skills development capacity of Uganda in the areas of science and technology.

"Its objective is to improve equitable access, quality and relevance of skills training and research leading to job creation and selfemployment. It involves the active participation of six public universities and two degreeawarding tertiary institutions in skills training, at the various levels of higher learning. The strategic outcomes of the project are access to HEST and information and communication technology (ICT) for delivery of HEST and improved quality and relevance of HEST in target public universities and degree-awarding tertiary institutions, leading to stronger links to the productive sector," reads a concept note from the African Development Bank (AfDB).



The Technical Teacher Education Complex



The Central Lecture Facility



The Multi-purpose Science Complex



The Modern Virtual Library

STUDENTS' WELFARE AT KYAMBOGO

Like the case is with other universities, Kyambogo University has a Dean of Students department. This department is charged with the responsibility of ensuring provision of welfare services to students and maintenance of discipline among students in line with the University rules and regulations.

Francis Mugomba, the acting dean of students at Kyambogo University says as a department, it ensures that the students' leadership is run in accordance with the University policy and regulations.

"Although the students' guild is an independent body, we are responsible for them. Most importantly, we guide them in their leadership. We give them proper direction," he says.

Of the over 22,000 students undertaking their studies at Kyambogo University, only about 2000 students reside on campus. The Office of the Dean

of Students still takes keen interest of the majority of students who stay in private hostels littered around the university.

"We go out to see where most of our students reside. We inspect the conditions under which they live, the security, the terms under which they occupy those places," Mugomba says.

"We have developed a document that has what each hostel must have in place, the basic being a tenancy agreement. In the past, some of our students were being treated unfairly because there were no written agreements in place. So our students were being taken for a ride."

The Office of the Dean of Students is also responsible for ensuring that the cafeterias are efficiently managed. Currently, only students who reside on campus are catered for, but this is about to change under a new approach.

"We are going to outsource catering services to private providers so that all students are catered for. We want these providers to give food to all students."

The dean's office also promotes discipline amongst students, and offering guidance and counseling services to students.

The Dean of Students department is also charged with ensuring that students get guidance and counseling services.

"Students come from diverse backgrounds. Some are battling with personal issues, for some, there could be violence at home, others are struggling with marriages, so as a university, we do not only look at the student in terms of academics alone, we are willing to listen and even help," he says.

Joseph Ocheng, the guild president of Kyambogo University says the frank and candid nature in

which the university administrative deal with students' issues is something to behold.

The guild president hails the current facelift at the institution is an indication that the administration cares about the welfare of the students.

"When we come here to study, we should get good facilities. The new buildings are a welcome thing, and we hope that more are lined up," he says.

Ocheng also hails the substantive appointment of Prof. Eli Katunguka as the university's vice chancellor.

"A lot of the chaos we had in the past was because the university did not have a substantive vice chancellor. The university has now returned to normality and the future looks bright."