

Landscaping, a new vocation course to try

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Students of Landscaping and Gardening during a lecture at the CIDI Training Centre for Gardening and Landscaping in Kampala recently. The course has since 2011 been included among vocational courses under Business Technical Vocational Education and Training.

Photo by Stanley D. Mukooza

In Summary

- According to Rosemary Nampindi, a second-year student at CIDI, one of the course units is on landscape – which includes compound designing, drawing/ making compound plans, implementing a plan, maintenance of gardens.
- Jucinta Kyobe, an animator, is surprised at how her skills in animation are gelling with with those in landscaping.

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By Desire Mbabaali

Chrissy Ethel Namono, is a former accountant who loves beautiful spaces and was determined to turn that love into a job. “After working a few jobs as an accountant, I decided to quit for my passion,” the landscaper and founder Iconic Hedges, shares.

“I did not grow up in a beautiful home, but when I travelled to other countries such as Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, among others, I appreciated how organised most of their homes and compounds were,” she states.

In addition, every time she visited a home, she found herself rearranging it in her mind, and with time, she realised she could do more than just imagine.

“I only had Shs800,000 as starting capital which I used to buy a mowing machine. Clad in overalls, and a mowing machine in hand, I would move door to door looking for clients. Sometimes I would be mocked but I never gave up,” she recalls.

As a landscaper, her first client was a home Namono had mowed earlier but found their compound out of shape. “I asked them whether I could put their compound back in shape. I rendered the service and the compound came out perfectly,” she exclaims.

Lucrative job

It is these that started recommending her services to other people leading to the birth of her own company - Iconic Hedges in 2016.

To improve her skills, Namono had to pursue a Certificate in Landscaping with Design Concepts in Dubai, UAE. And in addition to this, she did an online design courses from Real Time Architecture.

As more people appreciate beautiful homes, landscapes and gardening, in 2011, the Ministry of Education and Sports, under its Business Technical Vocational Education and Training programme rolled out an Assessment and Training Package for landscape gardeners (Level 1) for schools that train landscape gardeners.

One such school is CIDI Training Centre for Gardening and Landscaping in Kampala. Edward Mutebi, 19, is a student pursuing a two-year Certificate in Landscape and Gardening at CIDI who joined the course after Senior Four. “It was difficult to choose what I would do but when I learned about gardening and

landscaping, I thought that would work for me since I had studied Agriculture at O-Level and had passed it with a D2,” he shares.

The first two weeks were challenging for Mutebi, especially having to learn botanical names of plants and flowers, but after counselling at the school, he was encouraged.

“We started going to the field and it became interesting. We would go to maintain compounds and plants, sometimes even setting a garden in place,” he recounts. Four weeks into the course, Mutebi started earning. “Recently I landscaped for a client in Bukasa, Muyenga. I designed the compound, mixed flowers and also did an accent plant for her. I earned more than Shs400,000 from this job,” he notes.

About the course

According to Rosemary Nampindi, a second-year student at CIDI, one of the course units is on landscape – which includes compound designing, drawing/making compound plans, implementing a plan, maintenance of gardens.

“There is softscaping which deals mostly with plants and hardscaping that is composed of setting up areas, designs, platforms using constructive materials. We also study urban agriculture, which includes smart agriculture. Herbs production where we look at growing, producing and a bit of value addition of different medicinal plants and entrepreneurship, that is all about managing one’s business,” she explains.

Nampimbi has worked with three clients. “I worked on one compound, drew a plan for another and I have two clients I am going to draw plans for currently. Since I am just starting, I plan to sell my plans at about Shs500,000,” she says.

Complementing each other

Jucinta Kyobe, an animator, is surprised at how her skills in animation are gelling with those in landscaping.

“Even while doing animation, I used to do interior and exterior house designs so when I started studying landscaping, I got an idea of fusing the two because the software that we use in landscaping is like that used in animation,” she says.

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