

Dr Matovu now shifts focus to the boy child

After decades of attention and research focused on empowering the girl child to rise over patriarchy and take control of the narrative, Dr Lillian Matovu says, now is the time to increase support for the boy child too, to ensure equitable opportunities.

BY OWEN WAGABA

After decades of teaching both boys and girls in various schools, Dr Lillian Matovu, a seasoned educationist and Principal of Our Lady of Africa SS Namilyango in Mukono District says her focus has since been turned to the boy child.

"However great and appropriate things may appear, the fact is the boy-child has been neglected. The boy child is off track and needs urgent help," Dr Matovu says.

"They are lost and lagging behind. If you want a prefect, the girls will present themselves in huge numbers while it is different for the boys - you will have to pick them. If you ask a question in class, somehow you will have to choose from the many girls' hands up, while for the boys, they are devoid of confidence."

According to Dr Matovu, in her scheduled regular talks with her students, special sessions with boys only have since been introduced and are now a priority.

"I ensure that wardens organise at least one session every term for each class and we talk to them. And in these talks, I focus on embracing challenges, hard work, commitment and time management, building resilience through mistakes, and believing in their unique potential," Dr Matovu says.

The rise of the educationist

Dr Matovu was raised in Kanyanya District under the tutelage of her grandmother. After her S.2 at Kasawo SS Kigayaza, her educational journey was disrupted and she dropped out due to financial constraints and instead enrolled for a secretarial course at a nearby vocational institute.

"It was far cheaper and my grandmother could only afford that."

After the vocational course,



Dr Lillian Matovu is hardworking, and passionate about teaching, according to her colleagues. PHOTO/COURTESY

she applied for a job at her former primary school as typewriter. Excited about her new job and the possibility of independence as a young adult, the young lady rushed to her mother whom she had last seen during her P.7 vacation to break the news. The mother was however, not impressed and instead asked her whether she was still interested in studying to which she replied in the affirmative.

She was enrolled at Ngogwe Baskerville SS, Buikwe where, after four years, completed her A-levels. She joined Makerere University on government merit in 1993 for a Bachelor of Arts in Arts degree which she completed in 1996 and immediately went for her post-graduate diploma in education, completing in 1998.

In 2008, Dr Matovu acquired a master's degree in human resource management from Uganda Christian University Mukono, and in 2016, she embarked on her PhD at Makerere University which she completed in 2024.

At Our Lady of Africa

In 1999, Dr Matovu started her teaching career at Namilyango SS where she served as a deputy headteacher for three years before joining Vienna College Namugongo in 2002, where she

taught for one year.

In 2003, Dr Matovu together with her husband Mr Vincent Matovu started Our Lady of Africa SS Namilyango.

"We started with two blocks and three students and by the end of term, we had about 100 students," says Dr Matovu, who led the school as the pioneer headteacher for five years till 2008 when she took on the role of principal.

There was a radio programme called *Wewumulire* hosted by Mr Moses Kasuja on a local radio station. Kasuja would call out schools that had bursary schemes for talented but less privileged students to converge at a certain hotel in Natete, and here, parents of these students would come and pick schools for their children. Greatly in need of students, Dr Matovu went and camped at the venue so she could offer a few bursaries to the needy students.

"To our shock, it was like a market with tens of upcoming schools camped at the venue and offering bursaries. We soon realized that colleagues from other schools were admitting whoever was available. We stood by our school rules and regulations. We soon became the popular choice for many parents because of our stand on discipline, and by the end of the

WISHLIST

Dr Matovu looks forward to a day when taxes will be regulated for the betterment of everyone. "Taxes are good and we would want to play a role in the development of our country, but the problem is that we are overtaxed. We are levied taxes of all kinds and in all corners. Hopefully, something can be done about it."

Dr Matovu, therefore, built the school on the foundation of discipline and religion.

"We were very active in the church at both parish and diocesan level. It was until four years later in 2007 when the S.1s that we had started with sat for their S.4 exams and passed highly that we started attracting more students courtesy of our academic prowess."

The school has since grown from three students to over 2,500 students currently. And from two blocks, the school currently boasts of multiple storied buildings sitting on several acres.

The school has also birthed two other campuses, Our Lady of Africa SS Mukono and Our Lady of Africa Primary School, Bukasa, Kira Municipality.

Her delight

The educationist says that her pride in children comes in when they have left. It is then that she determines whether

she did her job.

"When I see my products doing well out there, in powerful positions, making money, influencing society, I feel deeply rewarded. I feel good when I realize that I had a positive transformative impact on a student," she says.

"I always tell my students that in this world, only two people would be happy to see you doing better than them, and that is the parent and the teacher. Whereas we remain teachers, we are always happy to see our students become doctors, engineers, lawyers and all that. The pride we get is unimaginable," she adds.

What others say

Ms Nalunkuma Daisy Kigundu, a pioneer student currently serving as a librarian at the school says Dr Matovu is a very hardworking lady, a unifier, team player and development oriented.

"She is developmental and wants to see others developing too, especially those that she works with. She has a parental heart and works very closely with her husband on almost everything, which has helped them to go far."

Ms Harriet Matovu Naluwiza, the headteacher of the school says Dr Matovu is very principled, wishes others well and loves sharing her experience and her journey to inspire others.