



12
YEARS

ABOUT NAKAIMA

Best friend: My parents are my best friends
Best colour: Black
Best food: Rice and beans
Role model politician: Speaker of Parliament Anita Among
Parents names: Olivia Mutesi and Sunday Lubale of Mukono Town.

when doing your work and also while trying to protect the environment?

The biggest challenges include failure by some people in my community to take my advise to them to stop littering the environment with plastics. In most cases, I find more plastics dumped in areas where I had picked them from a few days back. This makes me feel that people don't learn what I teach them.

What do you think should be done to ensure that people conserve and protect the environment?

I think the government should arrest and take to courts of law all people who are caught destroying the environment because it seems they cannot conserve it without forcing them to do so. Additionally, I think planting trees should be made compulsory for all adults in the country. I also think that the government should not allow planting of eucalyptus trees because they drain all the water from the soil and make it not good for growing of crops.

Apart from plastics, what other ways is the environment destroyed?

Burning of forests and bushes plus cultivating in wetlands also destroy our environment.

What is your dream career?

I want to be a doctor like my mother. I like this profession although I fear looking at dead bodies or people with big wounds. But my parents are encouraging me not to fear them so that I fulfil my dream.

What are your best subjects?

English and Science are my best subjects and I always score above 80 percent in exams and tests.

Any last word to fellow children and all parents?

For the children, I advise them to always work hard if they are to excel in life. I also urge them to learn hands-on skills because they can give them employment. I ask all parents to guide and also teach their children things from which they can earn a living.

Nakaima recycles bottles, polythene to make bags

BY FRED MUZAALE

Tell us briefly about yourself

I am Maria Nakaima. I am 12 years old and a Primary Seven pupil at Kids Care Primary School in Kayunga Town Council, Kayunga District.

I weave craft bags from used polythenes and plastic bottles for sale.

When and how did you begin this work?

I began this work when I was in Primary Five. At first, I used to collect polythene papers and plastic bottles, which had been poorly disposed of in our village and then burn them. As a clean environment enthusiast, I feel bad when I come across used plastic bottles poorly dumped. However, later on, a women's group in our area called Tukolere Wamu Women's

Group, taught me how to make crafts from them.

How long did it take you to learn how to make handicrafts?

Since I am in a boarding school, it took me about three months because sometimes during the training period, I was at school and only resumed training when I came back home during the holidays. However, I think if I was not in a boarding school, it would have taken me less than that.

What do you love about locally made decor in our homes?

I love locally made decor because they are cheap to make since they are made from things one can get from the local environment.

What types of handicrafts do you make?

I make handbags, toys and eco-friendly decor. Initially, I would make and give them out freely to friends but later when I realised that many people liked them, I started selling them.

So, how do you get market for your products?

In most cases, I sell them to people in my area and I also take them to shops that sell crafts in Mukono, Jinja and other towns in surrounding areas. Also during holidays, I sell them at functions in our area.

How much do you sell these crafts?

I sell them between Shs15,000 and Shs50,000. But when I taken them to shops, I am given a lower price because I have to leave a profit for the shopkeepers.

What do you use the money

you get from selling your products?

I sometimes pay school fees and sometimes buy clothes for myself. So, I don't have to ask my parents to give me everything I need.

Has the community you leave in recognised your contribution in protecting the environment?

Yes, local leaders have recognised my efforts to conserve and protect the environment by giving me certificates.

Do you intend to continue your efforts to protect the environment when you grow up?

Yes, I will continue doing so because I feel bad when I see people throwing plastics everywhere. These plastics are bad for our environment and will lead to poor food production if not addressed.

Also, during holidays I sensitise fellow children on how to protect and conserve the environment.

What challenges do you face