

# UNIVERSITIES LEAD NEW EFFORT TO SCALE UP NUTRITION IN SCHOOLS

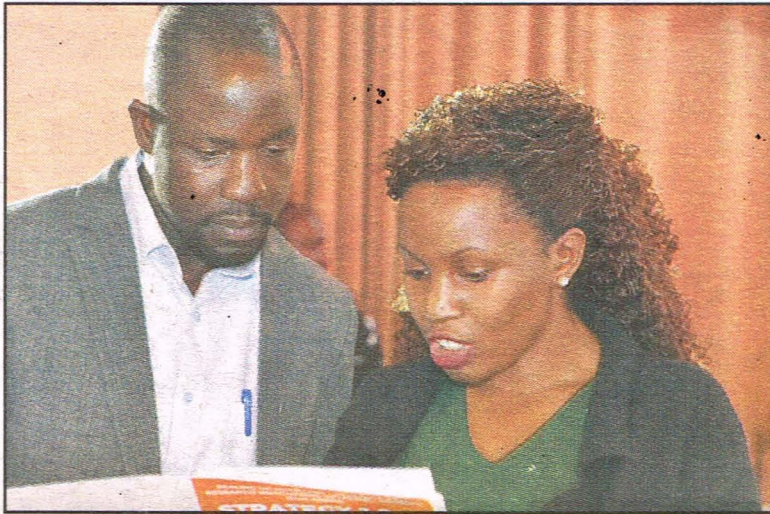
By Prossy Nandudu

Researchers and academic institutions in the nutrition sector have launched a new strategy aimed at increasing access to proper nutrition in schools while creating employment opportunities for students.

The Scaling Up Nutrition-Academia and Research Institutions Network (SUN-ARINU) strategy, launched on Thursday at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel, seeks to bring together academics, researchers and research institutions to develop solutions that promote better nutrition among learners.

Under the strategy, participating institutions will be mobilised to form a joint platform that promotes evidence-based policies prioritising nutrition at both national and sub-national levels.

Damali Ssali, the country director of the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) Uganda, one of the



**Dr Kikomeko (left) and a colleague review the newly launched SUN-ARINU strategy at the Sheraton Kampala Hotel last Thursday**

development partners supporting the initiative, said strong nutrition systems require stronger linkages

between research, innovation and implementation.

She said academic institutions

generate research, evidence, and innovation, while industry provides opportunities for product development, market expansion, technology adoption, and the scaling up of practical solutions:

Ssali said Uganda's nutrition challenges extend beyond food consumption alone and include issues such as the affordability of healthy diets, food safety, dietary diversity, climate-related food insecurity, urbanisation, and changing consumer behaviours.

"These challenges cannot be solved by one institution working alone. Sustainable progress requires stronger collaboration between Government, academia, development partners, civil society, and the private sector. We are very happy about the launch of this strategy because whatever we do is evidence-based," Ssali said.

Explaining the need for the strategy, Dr Peterson Kato Kikomeko, the team leader, said proper nutrition is a key

## FUNDING STRATEGY

Dr Peterson Kikomeko said implementing the five-year strategy will require approximately sh11.5b.

Of this amount, 50% is expected to come from the Government, 30% from development partners, 5% from the private sector, 2% from membership fees, and 3% from the strategy team and ethics committee.

At the same event, Unicef pledged sh600m annually towards implementation of the strategy over the next five years.

Commenting on the initiative, Timothy Musoke from the Ministry of Education and Sports said while such interventions are important, the responsibility for ensuring proper feeding and nutrition among school-going children primarily rests with parents.

During the event, several individuals were recognised for their contributions to the development of the strategy.

driver of Uganda's socio-economic growth.

However, he noted that malnutrition remains a growing challenge.