Universities producing unemployable graduates - employers

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BUSHENYI. The chairperson of Federation of Uganda Employers, Dr Silver Mugisha, has said higher institutions of learning are churning out poorly trained graduates whom organisations find difficult to employ.

He said whereas most graduates have the required qualifications, they lack skills, knowledge and good attitude towards work.

"You employ people with good diplomas, degrees and PhDs but these are just blunt axes. As employers, if you want them to deliver, you have to put in additional resources to sharpen them. This is very embarrassing and employers keep asking themselves whether they should employ graduates or train their own..." said Dr Mugisha, who is the managing director of National Water and Sewerage Cooperation.

He was speaking at the 11th graduation ceremony of Uganda Technical College, Bushenyl, on Friday.

Dr Mugisha added that higher institutions of learning do not emphasise on the mind-set, attitude and entrepreneurial skills of learners.

"As you train these people, know that mobilising their mindsets is important; to think the right way and doing the right thing. The problem in Ugandans is not (lack of) money but people have poor mind-sets," he said.

Attitude

Explaining that attitude contributes 80 per cent of what one achieves in life, Dr Mugisha said it would be prudent to employ and train a person with a good attitude than someone already skilled but with poor attitude “who will be busy leading strikes, seeking attention, bragging and showing off”.

Dr Mugisha said the federation is moving to forge partnerships with training institutions so that they graduate people who meet employers' demands.

The executive director of the Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board, Mr Onesmus Oyesigye, welcomed the partnership between institutions of learning and the employers' federation.

"The employers' input in training our students is key because if we train and they are not satisfied with our products, then it would be irrelevant. We will work with them [employers] to see that the skills we give are relevant to the job market," Mr Oyesigye said.

The college principal, Mr Silver Mukwasibwe, said the new technical, vocational and training policy emphasises workplace-oriented environment delivery.

He added that the policy will support creation of employable and competences relevant to the labour market instead of just awarding certificates.

A total of 683 students graduated with diplomas in several disciplines, including civil, electrical, water, ceramics and mechanical engineering, and architecture.

Figures from the 2014 national census show that 58 per cent of the population in the productive age bracket of between 14 and 64 years is employed. The report adds that 47 per cent of Ugandan males between the age group of 14 and 64 years are unemployed and there is nothing to suggest that the situation has improved.