

**REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY AT THE LAUNCH OF  
I@MAK.COM BOOKS, 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2009**

The Chief Guest, Prof. A. B. Kasozi, representing the Right Honourable Prime Minister

Honourable Ministers Present

Hon. Chairperson and members of Makerere University' Council

The Ag. Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Members of Management Makerere University

Members of Senate,

Deans, Directors, Principals and Heads of Departments of Makerere

Members of I@Mak.com (both old and new)

Members of the I@Mak.com Publications Board

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Innovations at Makerere University Committee Secretariat, I wish to welcome you all to this occasion, during which a number of our supported publications will be launched. We are very honoured by your presence.

I@Mak.com has a rich history. The project started implementing activities in July 2002 with the main goal of contributing to overall improvement of service delivery in a decentralised setting. Specifically, the project sought to strengthen the role of Makerere University and

other partnering Higher Education Institutions, in responding to human resource, and research needs, of decentralized service delivery. Outputs of project implementation to date have been numerous. I will highlight just a few significant ones for this occasion.

The project supported and initiated basic courses on decentralisation, which were operated by the Uganda Management Institute. Over 680 participants benefited from the training including local government staff. We also worked with the Ministry of Local Government to develop and revise some of the 30 modules for capacity building in Local Governments.

Support was also extended to pilot and facilitate field attachments for students at Makerere University, and for the development of field attachment guidelines. Field attachments and the guidelines have now been adopted by University Senate and Council and are being mainstreamed across all programs offered by the University.

I@Mak.com has been supporting annual Vice Chancellor's Awards for innovation and academic excellence to promote innovativeness amongst pilot local governments and academic staff in partnering higher education institutions. The annual local government innovations award worth USD 30,000, has been awarded four (4) times and the academic

excellence and innovations award worth USD 25,000, awarded five (5) times.

Support was also provided for Undergraduate and Postgraduate training of LG staff. 112 staff graduated with 1<sup>st</sup> degrees and over 80 employees graduated with masters degrees. Partial support was also extended to over 100 students for post graduate research at masters' level. The impact of these interventions on service delivery improvement has been significant with most participating local government reporting improvement in quality of services given by the trained staff.

The project also piloted a radio programme on decentralisation, which used to run every Saturday morning from 8.00 am on Radio Uganda and Star Fm. Regular meetings, dubbed the Communities of Practice, for participating local governments and Higher Education Institutions were also held during which participants shared lessons and experiences on innovative solutions to service delivery. Support was provided to replicate innovative solutions among the beneficiary local governments.

In efforts to support the University's overarching theme of taking the University to the Communities, I@Mak.com established two model villages, one in Maracha-Terego district (formerly part of Arua District) and another in Rakai district. Resource Centers have been constructed in both model villages and furnished with facilities including solar power,

internet services, furniture, water harvesting utilities and agricultural demonstration gardens among others. These Centers should ideally be demonstration sites for new and appropriate technologies from Makerere University and other higher education institutions. Some technologies, such as the soil test kit developed by the Faculty of Agriculture, soil stabilized brick making machines using hydroform technologies and rain water harvesting technologies have been transferred to the Resource Centers with support from I@Mak.com.

The project also supported establishment of a Resource Center on decentralization located at the Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR). The centre has been equipped with over 40 computers interconnected through a Local Area network with internet access. It is our hope that the Resource Center will grow and become a leading resource and one stop center for materials on decentralisation.

The piloting of an entrepreneurship course in collaboration with the Department of Food Science and Technology in the faculty of Agriculture and subsequent support to incubation of student proposals with good business plans has earned the University a Presidential Award to support innovations in food science and technology.

But perhaps one of our most notable activities has been support to research into, and for decentralisation. The goal of this activity was to

identify and propose possible solutions to challenges facing decentralised service delivery with the hope that research findings would inform policy on decentralisation of services. To date, over 300 research projects have been supported with most of these being fully implemented.

The I@Mak.com Publications Board was consequently set up as a direct response to a need to widely disseminate the numerous research findings that had been supported by I@Mak.com. One of the very first outputs of the Board was the initiation of a *Makerere University Research Journal* (MURJ), which was launched in July 2006. To date five Issues have been published.

Since 2006, the Board has been able to oversee publication of numerous books on different subjects, including those to be launched this evening. The mandate of the Board was later extended to commissioning publications where knowledge gaps were identified. I take this opportunity to commend to you; Right. Hon. Prime Minister Sir, the excellent work done by the Publications Board in partnership with the Private Sector represented by Ms Fountain Publishers Limited. The Board has produced over 40 publications in less than four years.

The ten (10) or so series on Animal Health and Production have particularly been popular with the public, as well as a Luganda language dictionary from Makerere University's Institute of Languages. We believe

that your office, Right Honourable Prime Minister, will find the series on Animal Health & Production very useful in implementing the Livelihood improvement component of the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund being implemented under your office. The Swahili books will no doubt promote the teaching of Kiswahili in our schools.

Before I conclude Right Hon. Prime Minister Sir, let me take on another hat of an author of three of a series of books being launched today. The books, called *Makerere Success Series: Handbooks for Academic Writers*, of which three titles on *plagiarism*, *Academic Writing*, and *Critical Thinking* are before you, are a result of a gap identified by the Board to address plagiarism and promote good scholarly practices among students and staff at Makerere and other Institutions of Higher learning in Uganda. I do whole heartedly thank [I@Mak.com](mailto:I@Mak.com) and the Publications Board in particular for their encouragement and support.

I am therefore proud of the work we have done to support publishing amongst staff at Makerere University, and other participating universities and hope that the spirit will keep alive. As we come to the close of the project, we hope that the University and Government will find resources to support the proposed revitalization of the Makerere University Press.

We are also hopeful that our various partners shall continue to support Makerere University to achieve a lot more. We do hope that our colleagues and the public shall find these books useful as *we build for the future*.