

WHO ARE MOST PROGRESSIVE ALUMNI?

2025 AWARDS

To encourage continuous innovation, past winners of Teachers Making A Difference were also assessed to find those who have made the most progress in implementing the lessons learnt. The alumni were requested to make submissions on the implementation of the ideas they acquired from the CPD programmes in Ireland or on improvements they have made since winning the awards. A team of *New Vision* journalists went to the ground to verify the information and the most deserving alumni were profiled in the paper. An independent jury of eminent educationists evaluated the ideas and the three most impressive alumni were selected for recognition.

NORAH ANYAIT Katekwan Primary School, Bukedea

A winner of the 2020 Teachers Making a Difference competition, Norah Anyait has transformed her school from a dilapidated institution into a hub of innovation and excellence.

Anyait isn't just a headteacher — she's a force of transformation. From rebuilding dilapidated classrooms to pioneering digital literacy in remote schools, her journey is a testament to resilience, innovation and the power of one educator to spark lasting change.

Her posting Chepkarat to Katekwan has already made a significant impact, shifting the school's focus from academics alone to a broader vision of excellence.

Upon arrival, she found the school in a dilapidated state and immediately resolved to change that.

"I wrote to the education office, which led to the allocation of renovation funds," she said.

She also introduced agricultural activities on the school's single acre of land to support the feeding programme.

Courtesy of these developments,



The teachers' quarters that the parents helped to construct

parents rallied behind her efforts. They helped construct staff houses, while old boys and old girls fundraised for a two-stance pit latrine, now nearing completion.

She mobilised parents and alumni to contribute to staff housing, latrines, a kitchen and a school store. Anyait also mobilised support for classroom renovations, boarding section and a kindergarten.

As part of the Teachers Making a Difference award, Anyait

earned a 10-day educational trip to Ireland in 2022. There, she observed inclusive learning, digital integration and effective student management.

Applying these lessons, she improved learning environments and helped reduce the school dropout rate, especially of teenage mothers.

"My initiatives included improving learning environments, following up on school dropouts — especially child mothers —

who later excelled in PLE, and raising Chepkarat's academic performance to second-best in 2023 and best in 2024."

She introduced digital tools like computers and printers, mobilised communities to build seven teacher houses and latrines, and lobbied for classroom renovations, a modern kitchen, and a boys' dormitory.

"My philosophy is to have a positive impact wherever I am posted" she said.

BADURU SILIMAN ALUMA Kei Seed Secondary School, Yumbe

From teaching one student under a tree in 2016, Baduru Aluma, the headteacher of Kei Seed Secondary School in Yumbe district, grew the institution into a thriving one, with 813 learners by 2025.

A 2024 study trip to Ireland under the Teachers Making a Difference project inspired him to implement inclusive and skills-based education. Aluma enrolled 38 learners with special needs and sign language teaching in Senior One and Two.

He established vocational training, acquiring 30 sewing machines and hairdressing equipment.

In 2022, Aluma emerged as the fourth best teacher, winning a trip to Ireland. Last October, he joined his colleagues on the journey — his first time on a plane and his first trip outside Africa.

Upon his return, Aluma documented his findings and presented them to key stakeholders, including teachers, the board of governors and the Yumbe



district education department.

"At Rosary College, I saw learners with special needs studying alongside others in the same class, taught by the same teachers. It was amazing," he recalled.

Back home, Aluma organised training for teachers on supporting learners with disabilities. Today, the school accommodates 38 learners with special needs, including those with sight and hearing impairments. He also introduced Ugandan Sign Language in Senior 1 and 2, with plans to extend it to higher levels.

Aluma lobbied for a braille machine from the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda and hired an instructor to support a student with a sight impairment. These initiatives have fostered a culture of inclusivity and interaction among all learners.

In Ireland, Aluma observed how students are equipped with practical skills to become job creators. Inspired, he secured support from COMESS Uganda, which provided 30 sewing machines, hairdressing materials and equipment for electronics and mechanics training.

The school now runs vocational classes after hours and on weekends, helping over 15 dropouts return to school. Kei Seed also partnered with Teach a Man to Fish, a non-governmental organisation which trained students in bakery, horticulture, and soap-making, and provided seed capital.

JOEL MUKOSE Namagonjo Primary School, Bugiri

In October 2024, Joel Mukose, the headteacher of Namagonjo Primary School in Bugiri district, travelled to Ireland as a Teachers Making a Difference awardee, returning with practical strategies that have reshaped the school.

On the trip, one of the teachers, Innocent Masanja from Namalu Mixed Primary School in Nakapiripirit, gave tips for a school feeding programme.

"He shared how he was cultivating orange-fleshed sweet potatoes and that the increased food supply not only improved nutrition, but also attracted more learners to school," Mukose recalls.

Inspired by this, upon return, Mukose allocated part of the capitation grant in March to cultivate an acre of sweet potatoes on school land.

"Today, both pupils and the 20 teachers regularly enjoy sweet potatoes from our garden. The pupils also acquire agricultural skills as they tend the crops," he says.



Mukose with learners in a sweet potato garden

The initiative has significantly reduced the school's expenditure on maize flour for school meals.

David Samanya, the chairperson of the school management committee, notes that improved feeding has led to increased enrolment.

"When Mukose returned from Ireland, the school had 1,100 learners. That number has since risen to 1,231,"

Samanya says.

Dennis Wanyama, the chairperson of the parents-teachers association (PTA), partly attributes the rise in enrolment to the new fence erected around the school.

"Mukose engaged parents during a PTA meeting in the first term, and they supported a fencing project. We feel reassured knowing our children are safe," Wanyama explains.