

# EMPLOYERS URGED ON FINANCIAL LITERACY AT WORK

PHOTO BY JOHN MASABA

By John Masaba

Employers in Uganda have been urged to integrate financial literacy into workplace wellness programmes, with experts saying this could help address rising personal debt among workers that is undermining productivity, increasing vulnerability to unethical behaviour, and weakening long-term workforce stability.

The call was made last Thursday during a Job Connect Festival held at ISBAT University. The discussions centred on employability, workplace readiness, and the widening gap between education and labour market demands.

Milton Stephen Owor, the chief of people and culture at National Social Security Fund (NSSF), said financial instability among employees is no longer a private matter but a growing organisational risk affecting performance and



integrity.

"It is very critical that every employee has a level of financial discipline and financial security," Owor said.

He warned that many workers are living beyond their means, creating debt cycles that follow

them into the workplace.

"If you earn sh1m, but you live your life like you earn sh2m or sh3m, where do you bridge the gap?" he said.

Owor said such financial pressure often results in distracted employees who are

preoccupied with rent, school fees, and loan repayments during working hours.

"Instead of focusing on their work, they are thinking about how to pay rent, school fees and transport," he noted.

Owor further argued that financial distress can expose workers to ethical risks.

"You become a target for integrity issues. You become cheap to be bribed or bought because your financial situation is unstable," he said.

The Job Connect Festival is

an annual career exhibition and networking event. The primary goal of the initiative is to bridge the gap between higher education and the modern corporate world by giving students direct access to potential employers, internship placements, and career development experts.

This year's event saw more than 25 companies participate in the latest engagement, with students pre-registered on a digital job portal to allow direct recruitment.

**The NSSF head of people and culture, Milton Stephen Owor, speaking to final-year ISBAT University students on job market requirements, alongside ISBAT academic registrar Dr Paul Giju**

According to the university, the system has already facilitated thousands of student placements through internships and job linkages.

Dr Paul Giju, the academic registrar of ISBAT University, said education and employment must now operate as a single ecosystem.

"Education and employment, these cannot remain separate; they have to fuse together to develop an employable and entrepreneurial ecosystem," he said.

Giju added that universities must increasingly align training with industry expectations while promoting entrepreneurial thinking among graduates.

On her part, Miriam Icheru, the head of people and culture at Prime Limited, said such forums expose students to workplace realities while helping employers identify emerging talent.

However, she warned of a widening gap between what employers are willing to pay and what graduates expect in terms of remuneration.

"Some job seekers come in expecting to earn the same salary as someone who has worked for 10 or 20 years," she said.