

Uganda Christian University Partners

“Thankful for your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.”

Philippians 1:3-5



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UCU's Esther Kavuo is 'Hooked' on Film

An Alumna Profile by Gloria Kiconco

Esther Kavuo, the youngest producer at the Uganda Film Festival, stepped onto the stage on August 29th to receive the award for best documentary for the film *Hooked*. She accepted the award on behalf of the team at Wizarts Media where she works in the production department.

Hooked takes an earnest look into drug abuse and the toll it takes on the individual, the family and the community. The documentary focuses on Joe Ibale who, now on the road to recovery, looks back at his painful journey from his promising outlook as a youth to the now-emaciated existence he lives.

When it was time to apply to a university in 2009, Kavuo was not keen to attend Uganda Christian University (UCU). Having studied in the Cambridge system in high school, she hoped to attend an international university. She intentionally avoided submitting her application and missed the deadline, forcing her to start a year later in 2010.

Despite her initial resistance Kavuo found her experience at UCU to be very fulfilling. “University is really where I grew as a person, where my character was solidified. I now see God’s hand in it all the way. I grew a lot spiritually from the ministry I joined (survivor influence ministry) and this growth facilitated all other growth in my life because I discovered my purpose for living, and everyday is an exciting chapter in that purpose,” she recounts.

Kavuo’s time at UCU also nurtured her passion for film. She says, “In my final year I thought of doing a documentary about the

centenary celebrations [as UCU and Bishop Tucker Theological College celebrated 100 years of existence] and I successfully did that, selling copies on Uganda Martyr’s Day and even entering it in the first Uganda Film Festival; it only got a certificate, because there was no category for a student documentary film.”

The cost of this documentary was long shoot days, a lot of travelling and many sleepless nights but the reward was the experience that prepared Kavuo for the award-winning *Hooked*.

Kavuo took an important step into her future the day she met Paul Kavuma in 2012. She was seeking out an internship when her professor, Geoffrey Ssenoga, took her to the Centre for Broadcast

Training, a project started by Paul Kavuma and Ben Bella Illakut (former head of Mass Communication at UCU). She trained for four months and the following year took an internship at Wizarts Media, Kavuma’s company. From there she stepped into a job at Wizarts in the TV department.

Work in the film industry is not without its challenges, both for the individual and for the company. Kavuo talks of the challenge to run more local content when the average Ugandan is wary of media, a challenge that was taken head-on in exploring Joe Ibale’s life in *Hooked*. Kavuo also faces challenges as a female in a male-dominated industry, and also as a young producer in a budding industry.

However, these challenges do not put her off. When asked about her future plans for film, Kavuo says, “Definitely more; much, much more is still ahead. Pretty soon I am going to be ready to go off on my own and do something similar to what I am doing now, though it will then be 100% ministry.” Her passion is making films that “move people to action while feeding their spirits and souls.” Kavuo asserts, “I am going to bring the kingdom of heaven to the media industry.”



Sarah Lagot Odwong

Bachelor of Arts

Mass Communications

Almost three years ago, I walked into the gates of Uganda Christian University as a freshman. I had just been accepted into the Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication program, which in itself was a miracle since it is a highly competitive program. By the time I reported to school at the end of August 2012, I was a bundle of nerves. My family, who dug deep into their savings to make sure I was at university, had high expectations for me. I shuddered to think of what would happen if I failed along the way.

I am now in my senior year, slated to graduate in October 2015. My three years at Uganda Christian University have been some of the most fruitful of my life. The moral foundation provided for me at Uganda Christian University will enable me to stand firm in the face of corruption as a woman of principle and integrity. Make no mistake! The journey has not been rosy. It has not been a straight path. Many times I have suffered from depression and exhaustion while facing personal and academic struggles. Sometimes, I felt like giving up. And being the introvert that I am, many times I struggled to deal with these issues on my own. However, UCU provided me with an enriching and uplifting Christian environment in which I was cocooned, mentors from the

Mass Communication Department and the chaplaincy to critically follow my academic and personal progress, and the knowledge of the immeasurable grace of God who comforts me with the assurance that even if I am in the deep end, He will come through for me as my rock and refuge. All of these have stood with me, they have prayed with me and most of all, they have loved me and believed in me every step of the way.

Now as a forward-thinking, focused, driven young woman of integrity, the future is exciting. My writing, video editing, and public speaking abilities will surely set me apart when I graduate. And as I build my future, the experience I gained while engaging in several student activities will be useful. These include serving as coordinator of a mentorship group, participating in Inter-University news anchoring competitions, writing articles in various print media, serving as class coordinator for the Public Relations Major class and doing freelance Public Relations work for a Ugandan musical outfit. In February, I launched my own blog which has garnered over 2000 views. This, by my standards, is a remarkable feat for a shy, introverted girl.

Jeremiah 29:11 has been my mantra: “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” As I embark on the last lap of this school journey, I keep that promise in my heart and at the back of my mind. The road at Uganda Christian University has not been easy, it has not been smooth but it has definitely been worth it!



2014 HIGHLIGHTS

View UCU's complete photo album at
[http://www.facebook.com/
UgandaChristianUniversity/photos_stream](http://www.facebook.com/UgandaChristianUniversity/photos_stream).



Left Column from top: Commissioning Graduands at the Bishop Barham campus; UCU's GSA team at the Google conference; Chancellor's Procession at UCU's fifteenth graduation ceremony
Middle Column from top: Uganda Studies Program students gather for a retreat; Graduation walk
Right Column from top: UCU's Guild Tribunal Secretary, Pamela Acidri; Archbishop Ntagali administers communion; UCU's Business Faculty recruits students at the National Council for Higher Education Exhibit

Dr. Monica Chibita

Department of Mass Communications

by Julia Yoder

Uganda Christian University is blessed with talented and wonderful staff members, one of whom is Dr. Monica Chibita, head of the Mass Communication Department. Dr. Chibita has been head of this department since 2012, and even in her short time with UCU, has made significant strides forward for the department and university as a whole. In the last year, Dr. Chibita procured a multi-million dollar grant for the department and was recently elected as president of the East African Communication Association; she is quickly building a strong reputation for the Mass Communication Department at UCU.

Dr. Chibita's educational background includes an undergraduate degree in education, after which she attained her Master of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communication from the University of Iowa and a PhD in Communication from the University of South Africa. Prior to her work at UCU, Dr. Chibita served as lecturer, senior lecturer and associate professor at Makerere University for seventeen years during which she also acted twice as head of the Mass Communication Department. At the time of her switch to UCU, Dr. Chibita felt that she had made her contribution to Makerere and the Lord was leading her in a new direction, somewhere she could make a significant impact.

Dr. Chibita brings a unique and valuable lens from which she views UCU. There are aspects of the UCU campus that she especially appreciates after her history with Makerere including the openness of UCU's Christian identity, the overall sense of community, and the worship hour held on campus twice a week. She also commented on the quality of students at UCU. In Dr. Chibita's opinion, the key factor distinguishing UCU is the type of student it produces. She aspires for each of her students to graduate as an ethical practitioner in the field of journalism, bringing the Christian perspective to a secular platform.

Currently, the Mass Communication Department at UCU offers a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication for Journalism and Communications and a Master of Journalism and Media Studies. The Journalism track focuses on radio, TV, online media and newspapers while the Communication track focuses on public relations and development support orientation such as agricultural and health communication.

In 2013, Dr. Chibita spearheaded the procurement of a grant from the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED), an organization which strives to build capacity in higher education institutions. Thanks to

"UCU is a very welcoming place, we treat our visitors well. It is a growing and exciting place; if someone is interested in Christian higher education, it is a place worth investing in, not just financially but with your time."

this grant of two million dollars over the course of five years, UCU has launched the Master of Journalism and Media Studies, sent five students to South Africa in pursuit of their PhD in Journalism and aided in attaining equipment and books for the department. In addition to financial support, NORHED assisted UCU during the implementation of these programs and services. The five PhD students have all signed binding contracts to teach for the UCU Mass Communication Department for a minimum of four years



Faculty Profile

after graduation. UCU is eligible to apply for additional partnerships with NORHED for further development.

It is obviously an exciting time for the Mass Communication Department, and Dr. Chibita's vision continues to expand. She plans to start a full PhD program and incorporate more mentoring and monitoring of the teaching staff in order to produce the highest quality of student possible. Under Dr. Chibita's leadership, expansion and goals such as this have become tangible for the Mass Communication Department and its future is looking brighter by the year. *"Our graduates should be able to distinguish themselves as strong moral pillars in journalism and media in Uganda."* –Dr. Chibita

Transformation at All Levels

Your support of Uganda Partners is an important part of the difference that UCU faculty, students and alumni are making throughout Uganda, East Africa and beyond.



Our goal with this newsletter is to give you insight into the many ways that UCU is making a difference in Uganda and beyond through the Department of Mass Communications. The department's excellence is recognized with a multi-million dollar international grant. The head of the department is voted into a leadership position by the preeminent professional organization in the region. An alumna is recognized for excellent work that addresses an important societal issue. A current student is prepared, both professionally and spiritually, to be a faithful witness after her graduation. These stories indicate the depth of transformation that is occurring through the work of Uganda Christian University. Similar stories could be told from every department at UCU; and we plan to tell more of these stories in coming newsletters. For now, we hope that you enjoy reading this edition and getting to know a few of the people who are transforming lives and being transformed at Uganda Christian University and know that your support of Uganda Partners is an important part of the difference that UCU faculty, students and alumni are making throughout Uganda, East Africa and beyond.

Mr. Mark T. Bartels
Executive Director

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A Partnership in Education



Dear Partners,

As my own children draw closer and closer to graduating from high school and heading off to college, I realize the value of your ongoing support for the students and programs at UCU. I think about the hope of the Ugandan mothers and fathers who want a better life for their children. Most of all, I dream about children who, like my own, have bright minds and undiscovered potential. These Ugandans, who have not yet arrived at UCU, but who will be transformed over the course of their three years on campus, already yearn to be people of impact in Uganda. Your faithfulness completes their journey from "hopes and dreams" to a "dream come true." Thank you for your partnership in education.

Mrs. Laura Corley,
Scholarship Coordinator

3 Ways to Help a Student Today

- 1 Pray** for UCU and the students, faculty and staff who work tirelessly each day for Uganda's future.
- 2 Give** a donation by check or credit card via the enclosed envelope, or by Paypal via our website.
- 3 Go** to Uganda and see this amazing university for yourself!

Today is the day to impact a student's life by supporting one of the following scholarship funds.

General Scholarship: any size donation
Achievement Award: \$500
Half Scholarship: \$1,250
Full Scholarship: \$2,500

Please contact Mrs. Laura Corley, Scholarship Coordinator, for more information.



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The University Prayer

ALMIGHTY GOD, in whom we live and move and have our being, make this University a real community, and may whatever is just, pure, lovable and gracious abound here. Keep for the University an unspoiled name; develop it for wider usefulness; and may we value it as an instrument for bringing glory to your name: through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

UPdates

- UCU celebrated 10 years since it received its official charter from the Government of Uganda. UCU was the first private university in Uganda to receive a charter.
- UCU commissioned a new coach bus, a welcome addition for the many student groups—from sports teams to the student guild government—who travel throughout Uganda and East Africa.
- In October, UCU hosted Dr. Wayne Grudem, author of *The Poverty of Nations*, as graduation speaker and to give public lectures in Kampala.
- UCU renamed its semesters to reflect the Church calendar. The January semester is now the Easter Semester; the May semester is now the Trinity Semester; the September semester is now the Advent Semester.
- The Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Dr. Elizabeth Bacwayo, was awarded a Fulbright Award to spend her sabbatical year teaching at Trinity Christian College.
- UCU now requires all entering students to own a laptop. Along with significant upgrades to the IT infrastructure, this initiative greatly expands the ability of lecturers to use technology to deliver information both within and outside the classroom.

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