



Ms Mutekanga shows off some of their products made of yarn at their office in Kasangati. PHOTOS/ ISAAC KASAMANI

expanding the initiative further. She dreams of training more women, reaching international markets, and making crochet a sustainable livelihood for many.

“This year, we plan to host our first project conference, bringing together creators from Uganda and beyond. We have already connected with projectors in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, and Namibia, and we are working towards expanding our reach. We aim to collaborate with yarn producers and establish a permanent one-stop project store in Kampala’s city centre. Our goal is to grow our membership from 59 to over 100 and establish export connections, so our members’ products can reach international markets,” she explains.

Pursuing passion

Mutekanga advises women to start. She notes that many people hesitate to pursue their passions because they fear failure.

“Success begins with small steps. Before making a big leap, test your idea. If you are interested in farming, for example, start with a few animals instead of investing in a large herd. Monitor your progress, refine your approach, and only take bigger steps when you are ready,” she recommends.

She also emphasises the importance of not quitting formal jobs impulsively. Some people leave stable employment because they see others succeeding in business without understanding the challenges involved.

“Take time to research, learn from others, and build a solid foundation before transitioning,” she mentions.

She adds; “If something is your passion, it means you love it. The key is to start, no matter how small. The beginning is never easy, but persistence and strategic planning will take you far. You never know how successful your idea can be until you take the first step.”

Beyond business, crochet is therapeutic. It helps ease stress and depression. The new space for the association is a safe space where women gath-

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What they say...

Challenges. “Accessing quality materials on the local market remains a challenge. The yarn available on the market such as Robin and Winter Queen, does not meet international standards since most clients prefer 100 percent cotton. However, pure cotton yarn is scarce and costly. Yet, the customers are not willing to pay as much,” Mutekanga explains.



er every last Saturday of the month to crochet, share experiences, and support one another.

Ireen Samalie Mutekanga during an interview at her office. PHOTO/ ISAAC KASAMANI

VOICES FROM THE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS



Eliaichi Minja
I am a founding member and membership coordinator of our crochet association. I discovered crochet during the Covid -19 lockdown, and it became both my livelihood and therapy after losing my job. Through the association, we market our work, network, and grow together. Crochet now provides me with financial stability and purpose.



Joyce Kuropecho
I am a community psychologist turned businesswoman. I started crocheting as a hobby in 2016, and by 2022, it became a full-time income source. Alongside crochet, I run small businesses in baking and soap-making. I enjoy the freedom of self-employment, despite its seasonal challenges.



Loyce Kamusiime
I am a founding member of the Association and head of marketing. I joined after a training session sparked my interest in crochet. My first sale was a bag worth Shs 80,000. Crochet is now my full-time career, and I have found both financial stability and personal fulfillment.



Mariam Nakonde
I learnt about the crochet training at Youth Dream Up Initiative through a friend and I joined. Initially, I never expected to earn from it, but it is now profitable. The first item I sold was a poncho at Shs 80,000 and I was excited. Now, I can make different items such as shoes and scarfs.