Media takes financial literacy to schools

This year, Vision Group's media-based financial literacy debut in 25 focus schools in Lira, using media as a teaching tool to take financial education to the remote areas of Uganda. The project is implemented in partnership with Makerere University School of Public Health ResilientAfrica Network.

The media occupies a unique position in society, not only to inform and entertain, but also to educate. Vision Group aims to use the project as a means to get teachers to engage better with their students. Students use a mix of textbooks, visual aids, tutorials and numerous supplementary tools to achieve a better understanding of classroom topics. This helps overcome the rigidities of formal education. The media as a teaching tool has varied benefits to the student and teacher.

1. Opens up learning space: It enables students to consult teachers outside the established classroom, scour the newspapers for information, surf the Internet for citations and consult.

2. Provision of feedback: Teachers can provide feedback from which the students learn how to use email and social media platforms such as Facebook which is a relief from having to convey all this information within the classroom.

3. Stimulates learning: It breaks the monotony associated with formal education. Newspapers, websites, social media platforms and audio-visual presentations stimulate the students' senses and create a more conducive environment to learn.

Students are likely to respond to a topic where they participate and feel a degree of ownership as opposed to dictation of notes which resigns them to the tedious role of 'note-taker'.

4. Interactive in nature: This increases the student's ability to communicate. A tool used in media-based financial literacy project is newspapers. The Palasa pull out while acting as a source of financial information, requires students to formulate their own questions to ask the seasoned financial experts that the publication employs, which enables students to express their ideas.

5. Eases the transition of learned behaviour: From classrooms to the community, students and teachers are able to generate a discourse of thinkers that affect them and society using a diverse number of media platforms such as radio, TV and newspapers, this enables students to articulate their concerns on a more public sphere and gain insight into community on how to tackle existing societal problems.

The media continues to be a significant resource in the education sector. If aptly applied, it could be the solution to engaging students in the classroom, ultimately producing a generation of critical thinkers that will transform Uganda to achieve its goal of attaining a middle-income status by 2020.