

NEWSFLASH

5th - 30th January 2026



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USSIA Holiday Program Turns School Break into a Business Launchpad



The 2026 holiday season took on a productive new meaning as a hands-on cottage training program officially kicked off on 7th January 2026, drawing young people and aspiring entrepreneurs into a vibrant learning space where skills meet opportunity. Instead of spending the break idle, participants chose to invest their time in practical trades that can immediately translate into income and self-employment.

The program emphasizes hands-on learning, allowing participants to practice what they are taught and gain real confidence to start or improve their own small businesses. By the end of the training, many trainees will be ready to turn their new skills into sustainable sources of income.

Trainees are being trained in a wide range of trades including bakery, detergents, painting, leather craft and shoe making, plumbing basics, phone repair, and hairdressing and beauty. These skills were carefully selected to match current market demand and provide opportunities for quick self-employment.

As the holiday training continues, it is already proving that school breaks can be more than just a pause—they can be a powerful springboard into productive, self-reliant futures. Through this initiative, a new generation of skilled, job-creating entrepreneurs is steadily taking shape.

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Fresh Energy for 2026: Kampala ZEC Sets the Pace

The Kampala Zonal Executive Committee (ZEC) held a strategic meeting on 9th January, bringing together leaders to map out priorities and activities for the new year. The session focused on building a clear roadmap that will guide the zone's programs and strengthen service delivery to members.

The committee also discussed plans for trainings, networking opportunities, and outreach activities aimed at increasing participation and impact across the zone. With a shared commitment to teamwork and accountability, the meeting set a strong foundation for a productive and well-coordinated 2026.

During the meeting, members reviewed lessons from the previous year and identified key areas for improvement, including member engagement, skills development, and business support initiatives. Emphasis was placed on aligning zonal activities with broader organizational goals to ensure that entrepreneurs in Kampala receive timely and relevant services.

By the end of the meeting, the committee had developed a clearer roadmap for the year ahead, driven by a shared commitment to supporting small-scale entrepreneurs in Kampala. The 9th January session marked an important step toward a more organized, active, and impactful year for the Kampala zone in 2026.



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Inside a Transformative Capacity Self-Assessment Session

A spirit of reflection and growth recently guided a powerful engagement aimed at strengthening institutional effectiveness and long-term sustainability. Leaders, management, and staff came together for a Capacity Self-Assessment Session conducted under the TRIAS-DGD project, creating a rare and valuable opportunity for open dialogue, honest evaluation, and forward-focused planning.

The session provided a structured platform for participants to examine how the organization functions across key capacity areas. Through guided discussions and participatory tools, stakeholders explored strengths that can be built upon, identified gaps that may hinder performance, and prioritized practical actions to drive improvement. This inclusive approach ensured that perspectives from governance, operations, and implementation levels were all represented.

Support from the TRIAS-DGD project made it possible to facilitate this important exercise, reinforcing the value of partnerships in building strong and sustainable institutions. The outcomes of the session are expected to guide targeted capacity development interventions and support more effective delivery of services to members and stakeholders.



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Mukono ZEC Charts the Path for Growth and Member Value



Fresh energy and a shared sense of purpose defined the recent Zonal Executive Committee (ZEC) meeting held in Mukono District. Leaders gathered to reflect on progress, strengthen collaboration, and map out practical strategies to make the year more impactful for members across the district.

Central to the discussion was the commitment to growing and sustaining a vibrant membership base. Participants emphasized that recruitment must go hand in hand with retention, and that both depend on one key factor: delivering meaningful, consistent services that respond to members' real needs. From business development support and skills enhancement to improved communication and follow-up, the meeting highlighted service delivery as the backbone of a strong and engaged membership.

Leaders also explored ways to strengthen teamwork at the district level. By coordinating activities more closely and sharing responsibility across the committee, members agreed they could increase outreach, improve responsiveness, and ensure that every member feels represented and supported. The importance of visibility within the district was underscored, with calls to regularly engage members, monitor their progress, and provide timely guidance.

The Mukono meeting closed with renewed motivation and a collective pledge to turn plans into action.

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For the youth beneficiaries, the tracing focused on monitoring their growth journeys after completing their skills development programs. The exercise examined how the acquired skills translated into employment, enterprise creation, or improved productivity. Many of the young entrepreneurs shared stories of increased confidence, better business management practices, and the ability to generate steady income.

Particular attention was given to women engaged in trades traditionally dominated by men. These women had earlier received specialized training along with machines and equipment to support their businesses. The monitoring process sought to determine whether access to these tools had contributed to measurable income changes and improved working conditions.

Following Up on GET SKILLED Beneficiaries

A purposeful follow-up exercise was recently carried out to trace youth and women in business who benefited from the GET SKILLED Project. The initiative aimed to move beyond training and equipment distribution by taking a closer look at real-life outcomes, measuring change, and understanding the long-term impact of the support provided.

Following up on beneficiaries is more than a routine check — it is a powerful reminder that skills, when combined with the right tools and continued support, can change not just incomes, but lives and communities as well.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

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