



Christine Nabbengo (left), Abdullahi Aden Shukri with her baby and Aguttu during the graduation ceremony at Makerere University on Tuesday. Photo by Mpalanyi Ssentongo

# Certificate holder bags masters in botany

By Cecilia Okoth

A journey of a thousand miles starts with one step, goes an old adage. This has been the case with Gorreti Aguttu, who, after O'level in 1999, pursued a certificate course in laboratory technology.

However, she did not give up on her dreams of attaining higher education. Yesterday, Aguttu was one of the two students who were awarded a master of science in botany at Makerere University's 69th graduation ceremony.

"This experience has taught me that patience and hard work pay off, no matter what you are going through," she told *New Vision*.

## How she did it

The single mother of two completed her master's programme in a record three years. Not even raising the

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tuition fees herself, which she recalls was a big challenge, could stop her. At the same time, she had to pay fees for her two children, both candidates, with one in Senior Six and the other in Primary Seven.

"I used to sell broilers (chicken) to make ends meet," Aguttu said.

## Lack of fees

Aguttu scored aggregate 12 in her Primary Leaving Examinations at Busikho Primary School and aggregate 21 at O'level at Dabani Girl's SS,

Busia.

She was, however, unable to proceed to A'level due to financial constraints. She instead pursued a certificate course at Kyambogo University.

"We were many children. Our parents could not afford to educate all of us," Aguttu said.

Her certificate earned her a place at St Peter's College in Tororo, where she worked as a laboratory technician, but she was not contented.

Aguttu's desires for higher academic qualifications led her

to pursue a diploma in education at Nagongera National Teachers' Training College, Tororo, while she worked at St. Peter's College.

Later, she stumbled upon an advert seeking lab technicians to work at Makerere University.

Aguttu applied for the job and was shortlisted in 2005. She eventually got the job.

Aguttu seized the opportunity at the university to enroll for a bachelor of science in botany and zoology in 2011 and graduated in 2014. Later, she joined the master's programme.

"I have used my experience to mentor young people in my church, St Andrew's Church of Uganda, Gayaza," she said.

She is currently looking for a scholarship to pursue a PhD. She also works as a principal technician at the agricultural production department at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere university.