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Freed from the brewers' rat race

By MAURYN KOECH

A group of illicit brewers have thrown in the towel and followed a new path of reform by enrolling for a training course for developmental skills.

Komongu Self Help Group from Chepkorio division, with the guidance of their local chief Luka Kiptoo have enrolled at Empowering Lives International to attain skills that will earn them a living as alternatives for brewing.

Propelled by the spirit of the group, exodus from the pot, more than 200 members showed willingness to register for the week long training but the capacity of the training facility could only contain 40 of them.

Samuel Teimuge, the founder and director of the training center is thrilled by the willingness and determination of the men and women who had willingly decided to stop the illicit brewing and start new lifestyles.

Gladys Kangogo, aged 29 has been in this business for the last two and half years, an activity she has shown great prowess in.

According to her, she was forced by family hardships to start brewing and to back her up; her

matrimonial family had been engaging in the activity long before her arrival.

Gladys, a mother of two was not just a usual brewer but a manager of her brewing den which she had employed a number of workers who would be paid daily wages for their job.

MARITAL HARDSHIPS

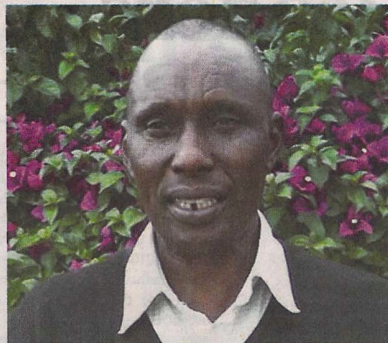
On a daily basis she would brew 100 litres of changaa, a step that elicited competition from her immediate family brewers hence betrayal to the local authorities.

The betrayal circle cost them a hype from sh 1,000 to sh 5,000 as bribe to the police.

"The claws of Jubilee government has pinched deeper, we can no longer survive the cat and rat game with the authorities", Gladys says.

Gladys wants to run a poultry business together with her husband with greater zeal and vigour than in the brewing, a new enterprise whose skills she has sharpened in the empowering lives training center.

Another 33 year old, Anita Kurui has been brewing since 2004 immediately she got married. Just like Gladys, marital hardships forced her into the



Samuel Teimuge the Director of the Ukweli Training and Rehabilitation Center. PICTURES/MAUREEN KOECH



Anita Kurui: Reformed illicit brewer.



Gladys Kangogo: Reformed illicit brewer.



Joyce Biwott: Reformed illicit brewer.



Musa Limo - Reformed brewer and drunkard.

trade of illicit brewing that she terms was the only way to survive then.

Her new trade made her stop going to church and opened a new page in life, the cat and rat chase with the police where she ended up

hustles the trainees have been through but are set for greater goals in life, among their expectations being to start agribusiness activities and personal restoration in salvation.

Mr Teimuge the director

"The claws of Jubilee government has pinched deeper, we can no longer survive the cat and rat game."

spending three cold long nights in police custody.

She notes the many losses she has incurred where she has taken group loans to invest in her brewing but yielded nothing.

"Many times I have had to pay people back for their broken pots whenever they are broken during police raids," she regrets.

An old hand in the field, Mrs. Sawe has been brewing since 1994 to school her seven kids; a trade she says has helped her pull through but has nothing to show for it.

Mrs. Sawe has attained salvation together with the other 46 reformates and terms the brewing a bad face they have brought upon their community.

These and more are the

of the center says they began he center to develop lives and restore lost hope to them that sought restoration.

DETOXICATION

He says the trainees go through painful detoxication process where they are trained on theoretical and practical skill that help them get alternative source of living from the brewing.

The center is partnering with NACADA to offer training for the trainees and other rehabilitates.

He further celebrates the stringent laws and implementation process in the county, where the governor Alex Tolgos has been instrumental in stopping the vice.