

Chat with

Mrs. Mukoto-Mewanu Mbone Elizabeth, Principal, GTHS Ombe
(Breaking the glass ceiling as first female principal)



Interviewer:

Madam principal, congratulation for being appointed first female principal of this historic institution.

You are now occupying the same seat that was previously occupied by your 17 predecessors, all men. How does it feel?

Mrs. Mukoto-Mewanu Mbone Elizabeth (Principal)

I am grateful and thank God for His blessings. I feel very honored, humbled and privileged. I also thank the minister of secondary education for the recognition and confidence bestowed on my humble person, to join the train of famous and great men who had headed this historic institution. I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to shape the destiny of so many children coming from diverse backgrounds. Ensuring that they become the finest in the trade they are engaged in, and in the process, move the society forward in a very positive way.

Interviewer:

You were trained at the Government Technical High School Kumba. How is the school in Kumba different from Ombe?

Mrs. Principal

Yes, I schooled at the GTHS Kumba. Pedagogically, there is no difference between the two schools. There are all set up to train young Cameroonians in the trade they choose. However, Ombe college has a loaded history that the school in Kumba does not have. It was the first technical school west of the Mounjo that started pre-independence. The conception of the school at the time was definitely different from the Kumba school. Most of the graduates from Ombe in the 60's and even the 70's went on to influence and shape technical education in Cameroon, at least West of the Mounjo. This rich history definitely bears on the mind of any principal of this institution.

Interviewer:

Prior to your appointment as principal, you were a classroom teacher. Do you miss that experience?

Mrs. Principal

Once a teacher, always a teacher and an educator. I was trained and groomed as a senior professional teacher and not a principal. Therefore, no matter the duty post or position in the education ladder, I still play the role of a teacher because I am constantly interacting with students, with respect to pedagogy and extracurricular activities.

Interviewer:

Can you please share with our readers what were some of the first challenges you faced and how you tried to resolve them?

Mrs. Principal

When I just arrived, the former administration told me, “Madame we have tried our best but there are certain things that are lacking in this institution. We need speed bumps on the road in front of the school to curb the persistent accidents that occur here and also, we need drinking water”. I was fortunate that in 2016, the African Cup Of Nations (AFCON) ladies competition was coming to the South West region. For that reason, construction works were planned on the road. I quickly contacted those who were involved. When I discussed the issue with them, they dismissed it, saying that it may instead increase the accident rate but I persisted. I finally prevailed and road bumps were created from Brasseries du Cameroon factory down to the bridge. There has not been any reported accident since then.

As regards water scarcity issue, it was a very serious problem for both students and staff.

Interviewer:

Can you please tell our readers about the pipe borne water the college just received?

Mrs. Principal

I am full of excitement when discussing this topic. Where should I even begin? As indicated earlier, the issue of lack of drinkable water on campus has been a waxing problem for me. The staff had to go across the street to Brasserie and even to Mutengene to get water. Like several issues, I prayed over this, asking God for a solution. My prayers were indeed answered. Ombe Old Students Association, Global,

headquartered in the United States of America, came to our rescue. When I had the first telephone discussion with the president, Mr. Paul Saah, about this issue, it sounded like a pipe dream...not sure if it was ever going to happen. A couple of weeks later, those discussions intensified and not long after, a spot was identified for a borehole to be executed. The work continued and sometime in March, water sprouted. You know the saying that “water is life”, right? It felt as if our life has come anew! In May, we had the handing over ceremony that was attended by the regional delegate of secondary Education, some alumni members and a host of others. I cannot thank OOSA global enough. On this note, I am appealing to all former students of the college to turn their attention and see how they could be of assistance to the school and especially to the students. I pledge my efforts to facilitate any assistance in that regard.

Interviewer:

Do you want to share any other achievements to have had?

Mrs. Principal

Yes. Let me just name a few. The famous “rocks club” was dilapidated and in a deplorable state of repairs, was recently given a face-lift. It may not be 100%, but it definitely looks beautiful. I also constructed a private toilet in the principals’ office that, hitherto, was not there. A guard house was constructed at the gate of the college to enhance security. These are just a few.

Interviewer

To conclude our interview, please share with us your perspective of technical education in Cameroon and what may impede its progress.

Mrs. Principal

The prospect of technical education in Cameroon is bright and promising. Increasingly, people are becoming cognizant of the importance of technicians. The society needs the finest technicians to build the country so we make our best efforts to prepare these young people to be their best. Many parents now are more inclined to send their children to technical education because once they graduate, they are not lacking. They can become their own employer and even employ others as well. I hope that this trend continues.

