



# Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU)

Enabling Research & Education Collaboration

## Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa Appointed Chairperson of the RENU Board of Directors

At the recent Board of Directors strategic planning retreat, a new era was ushered in for the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU) as Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa was appointed Chairperson of the RENU Board. Rev. Prof. Kitayimbwa who is also the Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) at the Uganda Christian University (UCU) comes in to replace Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello, whose tenure as Chairperson ended at the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting that was held in April 2023.



Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa

### Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa's Message to the Members

As research and education institutions in Uganda, we will forever remember fondly the Vice Chancellors of universities and Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of research institutions that met in 2006 in Entebbe to establish the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU). The initial but very important challenge that they sought to address through RENU was the provision of reliable and affordable connectivity to research and education institutions in Uganda. However, RENU's connectivity drive in itself is simply a means to an end of having high quality research and education in Uganda. Connectivity through RENU has afforded member institutions access to vast information and resources, facilitated communication and

collaboration, enabled use of online education and research tools, allowed sharing of education and research infrastructure across Ugandan institutions, and facilitated easier dissemination of education materials and research findings.

With over 500 campuses now connected to the RENU network, RENU's vision of establishing a **world class knowledge network for societal transformation** is truly alive. Among the many RENU member institutions are universities, Other Tertiary Institutions (OTIs), research institutions, hospitals, and schools.

In addition to the reliable connectivity, RENU has also ensured that the bandwidth unit price drops and becomes more affordable. From a bandwidth unit cost of approximately USD 630 (\$/Mbps/Month) in 2013, RENU has ensured a steady drop in pricing as more members have joined the network. Today, the bandwidth unit cost is only 6% of what it was in 2013. This means that if an institution spends exactly the same amount of money that they were spending in 2013 on connectivity and bandwidth, it is able to enjoy a service that is 16 times better than what it was in 2013, for the same cost.

On top of connectivity services, RENU now offers a broad range of services to research and education. These include but are not limited to, Learning Management Systems (LMSs), web conferencing, eduroam, cloud hosting, web hosting, identity federation, cybersecurity etc. RENU also continues to drive innovation around the use of eduroam. The staff of RENU have continued to push for innovations such as Metro eduroam that enables access to research and education resources even when off-campus. RENU has also continued to ensure that the very bright students in the various disciplines are afforded an opportunity to train and practice through its prestigious and competitive Graduate Trainee Program (GTP).

RENU also continues to enjoy good working relationships with government, the regulator, key Ugandan ministries in the research and education space, development partners, regional National Research and Education Networks (NRENs), and commercial service providers and Mobile

Network Operators (MNOs), to deliver services to the member institutions. In addition, RENU has continued to build the technical capacity of the member institutions through trainings and establishment of a vibrant community of ICT.

All this growth and reported achievements could not have been possible without the dedicated service of all the previous leaders and members of staff of RENU. In a special way, I thank Prof. Stephen Noll (2008 - 2011), Prof. Venancios Baryamureeba (2011 - 2014), Prof. Michel Lejeune (2014 - 2020) and Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello (2020 - 2023), the previous Chairpersons, on whose shoulders I am now to stand.

With God and the support of the current Board of Directors, staff and all member institutions, I am certain that RENU will continue to thrive as we seek, **to be a world class research and education network that effectively facilitates Ugandan research and higher education institutions to fully participate in and contribute to the global knowledge society.**

### Prof. Janice Busingye Appointed as Deputy Chairperson

At the same RENU Board of Directors strategic planning retreat, Prof. Janice Desire Busingye was appointed Deputy Chairperson of the RENU Board. Prof. Busingye has served on the RENU Board since 2020 and is the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance and Administration) at Kampala International University (KIU).

### Prof. Janice Busingye's Message

I would like to congratulate the new Chairperson of the RENU Board, Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa and myself for taking on this crucial responsibility. I really think that joining RENU in this leadership capacity at this stage is a very good opportunity because there is a lot to learn and do since RENU is a growing organisation. It gives us an opportunity to



Prof. Janice Busingye

see the organisation grow and be part of this growth. So, what I appreciate from this is that we have come in at a time where we can actually contribute and observe the effect of that contribution, and the impact on the members and the other people that we serve as an entity.

I look forward to engaging with the stakeholders, working with the staff, the new Board in place, all the members, and to work with them cordially and amicably, but most importantly to build a strong foundation for research and education in Uganda as far as provision of connectivity is concerned and going beyond that, to provide and explore more solutions for the industry to enhance the work that is being done in this space.

So, it is so exciting and at the same time a daunting task because with learning, there isn't much time to first stop and breathe, you hit the ground running, get in and start the work, and we can only pray that God will continue to guide us. We also count on the stakeholders and the regulators to work with us amicably to enable us push the agenda of RENU forward.

I must once again say that I am excited to be in this space.

### Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa's Profile

Rev. Prof. John Kitayimbwa is a priest within the Church of Uganda, Diocese of Kampala and a highly qualified Computational Biologist, with a wealth of experience as a Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) at Uganda Christian University (UCU), Deputy Chairperson of RENU Board of Directors (2020 - 2023), Chairperson of RENU's Finance, Administration and Human Resource Committee (2020 - 2023), Head of Computing and Technology, and Senior Lecturer in Computational Biology.

He is a confident and learned leader, demonstrating effective organisational management previously as Board Secretary to the Makerere University Retirement Benefits Scheme (MURBS) (2012 - 2019), and strategic approach to networking, grant application processes and working across many disciplines, functions and cultures.

Rev. Prof. Kitayimbwa is an astute educationalist, with a track record of raising over £8 million in research funding from many diverse international academic sources; and a personable, highly motivated, innovative, committed, well respected professional, adept at building, nurturing and

developing academic/business networks structured to promote collaboration and sustainable development for all concerned.

### Prof. Janice Busingye's Profile

Prof. Janice Busingye is the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration, as well as the University Secretary at Kampala International University (KIU). She is an Associate Professor of Education, and a Senior Lecturer at KIU, and was Head of Department at Makerere University of Adult and Community Education.

She is a passionate educationist and an experienced educator in higher education, having worked in higher education institutions for 20 years. She has published articles in various journals specifically on the politics of knowledge sharing, higher education, primary education and community engagement.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Adult and Community Education from Makerere University, and a Masters and PhD in Education (majoring in Adult and Community Education) both from the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa.



Some members of the new RENU BoD at a recent induction and strategic planning retreat.

### About RENU:

RENU is Uganda's National Research and Education Network (NREN). It is a member-based organization, founded in 2006, and incorporated in 2008 as a not-for-profit organisation and company limited by guarantee, to uplift the quality of education and research in the country, through the provision of reliable and affordable connectivity and other ICT solutions tailored for education and research.



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