

Kyakuwaire crawls to school

IGANGA

By George Bita

The teenage girl washes a cup using one hand while leaning on a pillar supporting the cutlery drying-stand.

From afar, she looks like any other person going about her normal chores. But that is far from the truth. A closer look shows that Hunasa Kyakuwaire, 15, has only one leg and one hand.

She leans over to ensure both limbs co-ordinate effectively to enable her shift from one place to another, with ease.

Abdulkarim Baliruno, her guardian, a resident of Namalemba village in Iganga district, says Kyakuwaire does domestic work like any other child.

"She never feels self-pity about her condition. That is how she was born and seems to have come to terms with her condition," Baliruno observed.

He added that her father died almost a decade ago, but the mother, Aisha Namumbya, passed on in October last year.

"By the time of her mother's death, I had already taken Kyakuwaire in since she could not afford looking after her," Baliruno said.

Long walk to school

According to Karim Maganda, the LC1 chairperson, Kyakuwaire attends school at the nearby Minani Primary School. She crawls to school.

"It gets rather messy for her when it rains, but surprisingly, I have never seen her absent herself from school," Maganda assured.



Kyakuwaire washing a cup while supporting herself on a makeshift rack. (Inset) She is in her school uniform. Photos by George Bita

Teddy Kafuko, her classteacher, says Kyakuwaire faces some challenges, such as writing and walking speed.

"Despite the shortcomings, she is interested in class work. She has

been promoted to Primary Seven," Kafuko said. "I am left out of co-curricular activities in the school field. So I usually sit on the sidelines and watch," Kyakuwaire said.

Lack of access

She added that the lack of facilities that enable people with disabilities access buildings is another source of discomfort for her at school.

"I was allowed to share with teachers their latrine since it is always clean. However, it also lacks the mandatory side grip, as well as an inclined veranda section meant for persons like me," Kyakuwaire said.

Johnson Baliddawa, the headteacher, said contractors awarded tenders by districts to construct such buildings are to blame for the omission.

"It is a universal rule that due consideration must be given for the PLWD. I hope in future, the engineers will include such vital components in their plans," Baliddawa implored.

Seeks help

Maganda suggested that Kyakuwaire could be assisted by availing her with a machine-operated wheel chair that would ease her movements.

"The manual type will not serve well since she has only one hand," he advised.

Balidawa called on Good Samaritans to help fund her education since Kyakuwaire's guardian is a peasant who usually fails to meet the school needs.

"At times the sh16,000 development fee becomes a problem for Baliruno to raise. If he has problems now, how will he manage to push Kyakuwaire through secondary or even tertiary level?" Baliddawa wondered.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT KYAKUWAIRE

Bushira Mupenzi, sister

She is all I want in a sister. Kyakuwaire plays with us hide and seek, plus other childhood games, such as dodge ball.



Muhammad Ssengendo, neighbour

Kyakuwaire has shown other people in the same category that disability is not inability. She is one person who is ever busy washing, cleaning the house or reading her books.



Jamawa Naigaga, guardian

I like this girl so much and she is a blessing to the family. She mops the house and proceeds to sweep the compound before doing anything else as soon as she wakes up in the morning.

