

# Queen of Katwe inspires girls

KAGADI

By Ismael Kasooha

Ugandan chess player Phiona Mutesi has inspired the young generation, especially girls, not to lose hope, assuring them that everything is possible in life.

"I began as a street child, but my life has been transformed because of determination and belief in what I was doing," said Mutesi.

Mutesi's life inspired the movie *Queen of Katwe*. The 2016 movie is a biographical drama based on a true story featuring celebrated Hollywood stars such as Lupita Nyong'o. It depicts the life of Mutesi, a Uganda girl living in the slums of Katwe, who learns to play chess and becomes a world star at the World Chess Olympiad.

Living in Katwe, Mutesi's world of hustling changes when she meets Robert Katende, a football and chess coach, who trains her and she turns into a top player, transforming her misfortune into a life of hope.

Mutesi, while addressing hundreds of students at African Rural University (ARU) in Kagadi recently, said it's not over until it's over like the chess principle, arguing that with determination one can succeed in life.

"When you encounter any challenges or hurdles in life, it is not the end of you, but just plan afresh and you will succeed," she said.

Mutesi said she was a street child but chess changed her destiny and she does not regret it.

"Everyone of us has a talent to develop if we get good mentors," Mutesi said.

Katende, told *New Vision* that they have decided to launch chess training in mid-western Uganda to help young people become critical thinkers using the skills gained in playing chess.



Mutesi watching girls playing chess at URDT in Kagadi. Photo by Ismael Kasooha

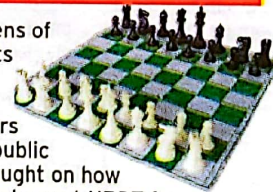
"Chess is a game that requires critical thinking, therefore, helping the young people make decisions after contemplating on the outcomes or implications," Katende said.

Mwalimu Musheshe, the chief executive officer of Uganda Rural Development and Training (URDT), which founded ARU, said Mutesi can inspire the youth and adults because someone playing chess thinks ahead of their opponent.

"If the principles of chess are applied in day-to-day life, I am sure we shall have more responsible and intelligent people," said Musheshe.

## ON THE GROUND

Dozens of students and other members of the public were taught on how to play chess at URDT for two days.



Leaders in Kagadi district applauded Mutesi for her endurance and determination, saying she should empower girls who are vulnerable.

Salim Komakech, the Kagadi resident district commissioner, after watching the *Queen of Katwe* movie, said Mutesi is better than public servants who portray a negative image of our country by engaging in corruption.

Stephen Byaruhanga Mfashingabo, the Kagadi chairman, described Mutesi as a role model for the country and pledged to support the distribution of the movie to all schools so that students can be inspired by Mutesi's story.



## Hoima residents reject land bill

Hoima residents have advised the area MPs against passing a Bill to amend Article 26 of the Constitution, which seeks to allow Government acquire land from the community without prior compensation of those on it. During a consultative meeting on the controversial Bill in Hoima town on Saturday, residents said the Bill, if passed would, be counterproductive.

## Busia put on cholera alert

Busia district health department has issued a public cholera alert following the outbreak of the disease in neighbouring Kenya. According to Bena Nanyma, the deputy district health officer, six people have been confirmed dead in Kenya. "There is a threat in the neighbourhood and we do not have to wait for cholera to reach here before we take action," she said. Cholera broke out in Busia district twice last year, claiming several lives.