QUOTE OF THE DAY

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EDITORIAL

Let's be enablers of gender equity

Twenty-three-year old Ariana Nanyanzi made it to the news this week because of her story of hard work and determination. Nanyanzi, who dropped out of school in 2021 at Senior Four due to financial constraints, is now a senior excavator operator at the Mbale-Sino Industrial Park.

When she dropped out, Nanyanzi joined a busy garage at the park in the Industrial City Division, Mbale City, where she began working as a mechanic.

In the obviously male-dominated environment, she endured a lot of ridicule but thankfully received some support too. The latter, together with her resilience, saw her learn the trade of vehicle repair. While there, picked special interest in excavators and was given a chance to try. The rest is history.

Her story, which was published in the *Daily Monitor* of March 11, reveals how supporting and giving young people and in this case, girls, opportunities, can make a worthwhile difference.

The issue:
Gender equity

Our view:
Let us continue giving women and girls a chance to try out what many would consider uncharted water, allow them thrive outside the box that society has relegated them to, and watch how they too can contribute to growth.

Last week, we commemorated International Women's Day under the theme, "Give to gain". Stories like Nanyanzi's speak a lot into this theme. Because she was given opportunity, she now earns Shs900,000, which she says she uses to support her siblings education.

Stories like this one inspire hope of change, especially for the numerous young people who see no future in formal employment or who are boxed out of a chance to education due to various challenges top of the list being lack of finances.

It is also testimony to the fact that overcoming cultural barriers and societal stereotypes that limit the progress of women and girls will help foster positive change in the lives of women and those in their circles of influence.

While strides have undeniably been made in supporting girls and women to develop in various fields, there's still much to do.

Let us ccntinue giving women and girls a chance to try out what many would consider uncharted water, allow them thrive outside the box that society has relegated them to, and watch how they too can contribute to growth.

Organisations must be intentional about being inclusive and provide a conducive environment for equity. According to the administration manager at the industrial park, Mr Laurent Zhang, of the 13,500 employees at Mbale-Sino Industrial Park where Nanyanzi works, about 65 percent are female. This is good, but even better would be to ensure the opportunities given are rich not only in quantity but in quality too.

Nanyanzi's story is a true inspiration and is bound to trigger many Nanyanzis to step out, be bold, and break away from set barriers. Let's support them to do so because when they win, we all win.

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