

Remmy sets out to jump-start the youth

Written by Racheal Ninsiima

Last Updated: 14 August 2015

Rehema Namusoke

In Rehema Namukose's vocabulary, the word complacency is missing. It is with this in mind that Remmy, as she is known amongst her friends, has put her energies into transforming the lives of Ugandan youths.

The 26-year-old heads the Youth Mentorship Initiative (YMI), an initiative through which youth can interact and network with, learn from, and be mentored by successful personalities in different disciplines in Uganda.

A trained journalist and public relations officer, Namukose seeks to empower the youth with big dreams and information to back up their attempts in achieving these them.

"While growing up, I saw many children, especially girls, drop out of school and it is only later that I discovered they were did so because of an early sexual debut. I set out to develop workable solutions to curb this vice," the bubbly Namukose says.

Unfortunately, one of those who dropped out of school was her best friend, Justine Namaganda. Thus the idea of finding solutions stayed with her as she grew older, motivating her to do her best in school.

CUTTING TEETH

Despite having the embers of this dream glowing within her, it was not until she joined Makerere University in 2008 that she struck out. Once, while searching for work as she continued pursuing her studies in Mass Communication, she discovered Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), an NGO promoting and providing sexual and reproductive health services.

Namukose admits that joining RHU as a volunteer has been her most liberating moment in life.

"I attended a three months' training in family planning, community reproductive health, peer support education and



HIV counselling and testing. Not only was I enlightened about safe sex and my own sexuality but it taught me how to express myself to the opposite sex,” she remarks, coyly.

The best part came when she moved out into the surrounding communities at Mpererwe, Wandegeya and Katanga, spreading the safe sex and HIV testing gospel.

Early in her study and volunteering voyage, Namukose had a stint as a freelance features writer with the New Vision.

At the end of her second year in 2010, she interned with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in the public relations office under the guidance of the late Lillian Nsubuga.

During her third year, Namukose was offered a job as a public relations officer at the Centre for Research in Energy and Energy Conservation (CREEK), at Makerere University.

She worked here until the end of 2013. Keeping tabs on new developments and exploiting available opportunities is an important ingredient in Remmy’s success.

“When a friend approached me in 2012 with the idea of establishing YMI to solve youth unemployment, I took it up, since I had worked with the youth before.

ATLAS CORP FELLOW

However, when the organisation was just in its infancy, the 2012 graduate was honoured with a one-year Atlas Corps fellowship in New York, USA, in January 2014.

This was in recognition of her volunteer work. Atlas Corps is an overseas fellowship for the world’s best non-profit leaders with a mission of addressing critical social issues by developing leaders.

During the fellowship, Remmy was attached to the Women Deliver Organisation as a communications assistant. Here, she was channelled into advocacy and communication of reproductive health rights and well-being of girls.

“I was also exposed to different high level platforms such as the UN general assembly and learnt diverse aspects of non-profit management such as project planning and fundraising which I am incorporating into my work,” she boasts.

YMI AND BEYOND

Perhaps Namukose’s proudest achievement is keeping YMI alive, growing it and making it impactful. On her return to Uganda in 2015, she introduced YMI’s training programme, which has become the premier component of the initiative. The programme aims to ultimately provide fresh graduates with skills necessary for the job market.

“Most recently, 15 fresh graduates successfully completed class one of career orientation and we are in the process of getting them apprenticeship,” she told The Observer.

Commenting on her achievements, Annet Nantongo, her friend of 10 years, describes her as a risk-taker, flexible and open-minded person.

“If she has set her sights on achieving something, she will do all it takes and take all the risks until she has achieved it. Her ambitious guts never let her down,” Nantongo observes.

In the meantime, Remmy is also serving as a country coordinator and volunteer with Child-Birth Survival International (CSI), an organisation that aims to extend reproductive and maternal health services to vulnerable communities.

Still raking in the recognition, Namukose was recently awarded a full two-year scholarship by the SIT Graduate Institute in Vermont, USA to pursue masters in Sustainable Development. Her majors will be in advocacy, social change and leadership.

ABOUT HER

Namukose is the second born of Mutwalibi Musoke and Faith Esereda's three children, and she is the only girl. She attended MM College Wairaka in Jinja for O-Level and Our Lady of Good Counsel, Gayaza for A-Level.

In the little spare time she has, Remmy, who is single, loves travelling, meeting new people, cooking and reading.

ninsiima@observer.ug

[inShare](#)

Add comment