

# EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

MARY TAGALILE

AUGUST 2019

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## Opportunities for young Women in Tanzania

A PANEL DISCUSSION



Students and Pannalist

**On the 26th August 2019, the Bethsaida Girls Secondary School and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) organised a joint panel discussion in Dar es Salaam. The discussion was about the opportunities for young women in Tanzania. Three successful young women from different professions were invited as panelists, to speak to the Secondary School for orphan girls about their experiences and obstacles they had to overcome in their professional lives. 119 students participated in the discussion.**

The Headmistress of the Bethsaida Girls Secondary School, Ms. Holliness Moshi welcomed all the guests to the venue. Afterwards, the moderator, Ms. Sarah Joram, introduced the students, the panelists and KAS team. She also carried out an exercise that revealed the Students career expectations.

Greetings on behalf of KAS were made by Mary Tagalile, the Programme Coordinator. She highlighted the intention of this workshop which was to provide the students with role models that motivate them to become successful and responsible citizen that give back to the community they live in.



The Panel discussion started after a short play by the students, which portrayed the history of the Bethsaida Girls Secondary School from 2005. The play showed the success and the challenges the school is facing and the way they strive to excellency.

The three panellists were: Dr. Helga Mutasingwa - a young Medical Doctor at ICAP Tanzania, working as a Linkage and Retention Officer, who is also a national leader in Tanzania Girl Scouts Association and a member of Rotary International; Ms. Maria

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Kayombo - a Project Manager of the United for Our Rights Project and Ms. Joyce Swebe - a Journalist, Chief Editor at the Clouds Media Group and also a Chairperson of the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA).

Helga Mutasingwa started by narrating her success story. She wanted to become a medical doctor and specifically a neurosurgeon. Her journey was not easy as she had to make a lot of choices, compromises and sometimes make decisions contrary to what was expected by her family and friends. The vision and the urge inside her gave her strength to work hard towards realising her dream. She made sure that she remained focused and believed that she will eventually achieve. Apart from academic qualifications, Dr. Mutasingwa has developed interest in volunteer work. She also engaged herself in youth groups like Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Through these engagements she managed to establish active networks nationally and internationally. This has helped her a lot in her current career. Her story made the students understand that community engagement and networking are important skills.

Maria Kayombo's success story started with a dream. Maria rose from volunteering in the community to being a Project Manager. This was only possible as she studied hard and was devoted to her work despite of all odds. She encouraged the students to excel in their studies and to avoid distraction from outside. She made the students realise that one needs to have goals in their life. Hereby it is recommended to have a plan B in case plan A fails to work. Altogether it is important to learn from your mistake and view the shortcomings as challenges. Ms. Kayombo also emphasised that the young women need to believe in themselves and know that they are worthy. In order to succeed one needs to use their personal gift and not distract themselves with what other people think.

The final discussant Joyce Swebe shared her heartbreaking lifestory as an orphan. Her father died very early in her live and left her, her two siblings (Joyce being the eldest child) and her mother. Her mother was devoted to her family and to the extended

family, she was a hard working Woman. But, a few years later her mother also passed away. The siblings were left alone and had to survive on their own. At the beginning, Ms. Swebe was not serious with her studies. The selection of her career was not certain and for a long time she did not have an idea of what to Study. With time, she started feeling a calling of becoming a journalist. She managed to secure an opportunity in a college by herself. While at college, she secured an internship with a media house and that is when her professional life in electronic journalism started. It was not easy for her as a young women to compete with men. She had to pass a lot of hurdles in order to reach where she is now. Ms. Swebe gave the participants an insight in journalism (which to her is about informing, educating and entertaining) and in the challenges she as a woman faced in the field. She pointed out that women and men have equal rights and encouraged the students to believe in themselves and not feel inferior by men.

After the Introduction of the panelist the Students were given time to ask their questions. It was a very lively discussion and the students showed a lot of interest.

At the end Mr. El-Noshokaty , country Director of KAS briefly added that the intention of KAS was to contribute to positive success stories and also provide an opportunity to discuss topics that interest the young women. Ideas for topics that the students would like to learn outside their normal studies were collected.



At the end of the event the students were still eager to hear more, they expressed their satisfaction by gathering in small groups around the panelist to know more about them.