



**Women
leaders
making a
difference**





Senator Daisy Kanainza from Kakamega County. Kanainza plans to contest for the Likuyani Parliamentary seat during the 2017 General Elections.

PHOTO: GEORGE NGESA

Young senator with a transformative agenda

BY FAITH MUIRURI

Daisy Kanainza's nomination to the Senate at very young age is testimony of what commitment and investment in politics can produce.

As the Orange Democratic Movement's Secretary General of youth affairs in Kakamega County, she was bestowed with a heavy task of mobilizing voters to vote her party candidate. Something she did with great success. It is this contribution that earned her nomination to the Senate.

Kanainza recalls putting use the skills she had acquired in Norway while attending a forum for young politicians in Africa during the campaigns.

"I had just participated in a forum for young politicians in Africa where we were trained on how to conduct a campaign and use volunteer systems. I replicated this concept during the campaigns and it worked very well," says the youthful Senator who has just turned 25 years.

She says out of the 12 parliamentary seats in the County, ODM bagged six and 62 ward seats out of the 80. She is happy she contributed to this performance.

This not only marked to boost her political career but helped her to bolster her stature within the party and earning her the nomination.

Kanainza has managed to sustain her political momentum and today serves as the vice chair of the implementation committee in the Senate.

"I have managed to bring a number of statements before the floor of the house which have sailed through," she explains.

She cites the recent recruitment in the defense force where she had sought to have more youth recruited in a bid to reduce the level of unemployment, fight crime, curb drug abuse and boost their entrepreneurial skills.

The Senator has also recommended a wide range of changes to strengthen the Public Procurement Asset Bill to ensure that young people not only access the 30percent procurement quota but also benefit from a larger share of the allocation.

"The 30percent procurement quota has been set aside for the women, youth and people with disabilities. The youth cut across all this groups and should therefore get the largest share," she adds during the interview.

Authority

At the moment Kanaiza is pushing for the establishment of an Authority that will be tasked with creating a database for all the young people in this country.

"This database will help us know the manpower and skills that we can tap into among the youth who are currently grappling with the issue of unemployment," she explains.

The Senator notes that scores of young people have invaluable skills which have not been tapped mainly due to the absence of a data base. With the database, she says that we will be able to know for instance that Nairobi County has this number of young people and their

level of education and skills.

She notes that most young have been left out in appointments on the pretext that they lack the requisite skills and experience. One of the problems is lack of a policy framework that can help guide in the management on how to deal with the rising levels of unemployment.

“If we create an enabling environment, young people will be able to do business and engage in entrepreneurial activities without necessarily begging the government.

Introducing a Bill

She says that she plans to introduce a bill that will streamline courses offered by village polytechnics in the Counties. This will ensure courses offered by County polytechnics are tailored to address specific County needs.

“Initially young people would be trained on tailoring and masonry but agricultural counties such as Trans Nzoia, Kakamega and Bungoma are now in need of agricultural skills that can help boost their production,” she adds.

She says that polytechnics in Counties like Kisumu and Mombasa which have a lake or an ocean, can train young people on fish farming and ship management courses while City counties should focus on IT solutions.

“The Bill will put into account new techniques needed in the counties to respond to emerging demands,” she explains.

The Senator also sits in the Education and ICT committees in the house and has been able to visit different counties that inform her perspectives on issues.

“As a member of the ICT committee, I have been able to go to 28 counties to

monitor the gaps and successes in the implementation process,” she points out.

She further says that she has come up with youth empowerment programmes in different counties which bring on board all youth leaders.

“I have been visiting counties to ensure that the 30 percent procurement quota is adhered to because we need the young people to benefit from the tenders,” she adds.

She notes that the county governments have tried to do their best because their tenders are done in a youth friendly way. “But we are trying to compel both the County and National governments to give specific tenders to the youth.”

Her other area of focus is strengthening the table banking concept among women in Lugari and Likuyani Constituencies.

“I have been working with a group of women traders and I am trying to see how best we can empower them transform their weekly contributions into establishing a Sacco that will help them grow their businesses,” she reveals.

Table banking

She says that most of these women are market traders who use their proceeds to fend for their families and educate their children.

Apart from the table banking concept, the senator has donated aprons to the women groups to make sure they maintain high standards of hygiene in the area prone to cholera outbreak.

“I have donated water tanks to Bongoni, Bunyenya Friends School and Lulondo Primary school after the Cholera outbreak.

Kanainza has also been supporting football tournaments in Likuyani

constituency in a bid to ensure that the youth are actively engaged and have a source of income.

The Senator also runs a mentorship programme and visits different schools in Kakamega County on a monthly basis with a view to ensuring that girls remain in school.

“The level of girls dropping out of school in the County is very high and I have a mentorship programme that includes holding forums in schools every month,” she says.

Challenges encountered

Kanainza says this journey has not been without challenges and cites culture which remains a major impediment to women leadership. “Culture still undermines women in leadership because men still feel that they are better placed to articulate public issues,” she adds.

As a senator, she has made sure that the space accorded to her in the senate is properly utilized by pushing the women and youth agenda.

To her, women must fight to safeguard the gains in the Constitution. “Let us take charge and not wait for people to make decisions on our behalf. We should be able to scrutinize budgets and demand for gender responsive allocations,” she says, singling the Ksh 400 million allocated for sanitary towels which she says is not enough to serve the large number of school girls in the country.

Kanainza will be contesting for the Likuyani Parliamentary seat in the next General Elections and is currently engaging with the electorate on the same. She is working on a strategic plan to make sure that her political plan succeeds.

Kibe's progressive Bills impacting lives



Ann Wanjiku Kibe during the interview PHOTO. GEORGE NGESA

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

When Ann Wanjiku Kibe graduated from Kenyatta University in 2002 armed with a Bachelor of Education degree, politics was the last thing on her mind.

Kibe was excited when she landed her first job as a secondary school teacher and saw a bright future ahead of her youthful life.

But that thrill did not last long after she faced the reality of what it entails to be a teacher, the responsibility and the monthly take-home pay cheque which was not much to talk about in public.

She quit imparting knowledge to her students and instead opted to work as a news anchor at Kameme FM, a popular vernacular station broadcasting in Kikuyu language.

It was while working as a journalist that she came face to face with the ordinary people venting their frustrations through the radio station on the one hand, while the who-is-who in the society used the power of the media to shape and influence their political and business interests.

Within a short time and before she knew it, she was brushing shoulders with the prominent and influential leaders, especially those from Central Kenya.

Says Kibe: "I am passionate about current affairs and as a news anchor who also hosted talk-shows on topical local and national issues, it brought me close to politicians. By then I was not sure I wanted to plunge into politics."

Indeed, little did she know that her star would rise beyond her widest imagination a decade later to make history as the only nominated Member of the Kiambu County Assembly to be elected to chair a committee?

But the more she hosted politicians on her talk-show and worked as an anchor the more she found herself learning the ropes of what it takes to be a politician.

Tactical move

It was on the eve of the 2013 polls that she made a tactical move which changed her life: quitting her job and venturing into business as an events-organiser. She also joined the presidential campaign team for the then Gatundu South MP, Uhuru Kenyatta, and the gubernatorial campaign team of former Juja MP, William Kabogo.

Her efforts paid dividends when the two leaders were elected President and Kiambu Governor, respectively, on a TNA ticket. The party rewarded her with the nomination.

Looking back, Kibe says: "At that time I was not sure I wanted to get into politics when nominated as an MCA. It was tricky because I had no ward to represent."

She is one of the 27 nominated MCAs out of the 87 Kiambu County Members of the County Assembly, whose offices are at Kiambu Town, 20Km. from Nairobi. Only four women were elected as MCAs during the 2013 General Elections in the County.

Indeed, for the past two years as an MCA, she has made a lot of impact in and outside the County Assembly by playing her triple role of oversight, legislation and representation.

One of the highlights of her tenure so far is that she used her lobbying skills among her colleagues to get herself elected as the only female to chair a committee in the County Assembly.

Says Kibe: "I have now settled down and I am working hard as the chairperson of the County Assembly's innovation, communications and broadcasting committee."

Asked about her passion, she cites the anti-gender based violence campaign which she has led from the front from the days she was working as a news anchor and radio presenter.

In 2103, she drafted motion to deal with the plight of survivors of GBV in the expansive and densely populate County that borders Nairobi, Machakos, Muranga, Kiambu and Nyandarua Counties.

Kibe was concerned about the high number of GBV cases and decided to be part of the solution rather than be part of the problem by just talking and politicking about it.

By then, cases of rape, incest, defilement and sodomy in Kiambu County was worrying, according to her. Out of the 800 cases reported in the country, Kiambu had about 80 cases affecting women and the girl child.

Says the Kibe: "When I was confronted with those statistics, I asked myself: 'what is the problem with our people? When I investigated further, the figure of 79 was actually an understatement. I then decided to play an active role in fighting GBV."

Later, Kibe moved in the Assembly the Post Rape Case Bill, to address the challenges faced by the hundreds of GBV victims in the County.

Lobbying

She used her lobbying and mobilization skills and ensured that the MCAs not only understood the merit of the Bill, but were also ready to join the anti-GBV campaigns in the County Assembly and in the County as a whole through advocacy and public forums. Public forums were held and included officials from the police, the judiciary, the civil society and the children's department.

The Bill, which sought to strengthen policies around the implementation of some aspects of the Sexual Offenses Act, was passed and is being implemented. Now, Kiambu residents have a 24-hour toll-free telephone number to call for help in case of a GBV.

Another achievement for the soft spoken MCA is moving a motion

seeking to have the Kiambu County Government set up a radio station to cater for the interests of the close to one million residents. This is in line with an announcement by the Communications Authority formerly, the Communications Commission of Kenya to provide an FM license to each of the 47 Counties to promote dialogue within and with their neighbours and stakeholders.

Outside the County Assembly, Kibe has been campaigning for the two thirds gender rule to be implemented to the letter, saying emphasis should be on urging more of them to vie for elective seats.

Another success is under the Boost Initiative, which Kibe has been lobbying for more youth, women and the disabled to be given tenders to supply goods and services to the County Government.

Mentorship

Says Kibe: "I have also been doing mentorship programme for the girl child for Standard Eight and for Form Four students who are preparing to seat for the national examinations.

I was mentored and I believe in women's leadership. We must endear ourselves and have more men to accept women's leadership.

As 2017 approaches, Kibe says she is eyeing a parliamentary seat, but said she will say the exact constituency when the right time comes.

Musya prepares the stage for the 2017 battle

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

To Emmaculate Musya, politics is a means to an end and not a dirty game as most Kenyans have been told over the years.

She was among the thousands of politicians who plunged into politics on the eve of the 2013 General Elections vying for one of the six coveted seats that were up for grabs.

The six were the Member of the County assembly (MCA), Member of Parliament, County Women's Representative (MP), Governor's seat and the Presidential race.

The bug of politics bit Musya a decade ago when she was working with women groups in the six informal settlements of Nairobi city, which has a population of four million.

This passion for working with women groups made her have a love for politics, which has been a domain of men for most of the 51 years since independence in 1963. Musya has focused on women empowerment programmes which have helped build capacity and promote her networking among the women in the different villages in Kibera, Mathare, Kangemi, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, Kayaba, Korogocho and parts of Dandora.

In the last General Elections, she vied for Nairobi County Women Representatives'



Emmaculate Musya
PHOTO. GEORGE NGESA

seat on an ODM ticket, but had to drop out midstream after she was prevailed upon by the party bigwigs. Her active involvement in the women groups programmes helped her be recognized and encouraged by her women supporters to go for the coveted seat which was later won by Ms Rachel Shebesh of Jubilee Alliances.

However, that did not dampen her spirits in politics, but instead motivated her even more to campaign for the party's candidates.

Her party later nominated her as MC As in the Nairobi County Assembly, where there are only four elected women.

Responsibility

Since then, "mheshimiwa" has used the new responsibility to fight for the rights of the women in the eight densely populated slums and Nairobi as a whole.

Says Musya: "I decided to plunge into politics after realising that the voice of women was not being heard in decision-making processes especially at the grassroots. That is why I decided to vie in 2012 to improve on this."

One of her key areas of success is mobilizing women for development purposes. This includes the table banking women groups that started with contribution of shs10 per person is now contributing Shs1,000 per person every week."

By June 2015, they had 40,000

active members. The members have a success story to tell, some have invested in stocks at the Nairobi Securities while others have put their money in the real estate sector.

The groups have bought land and put up residential and commercial buildings in Nyayo Estate Embakasi, at Pipeline Estate along Outer Ring Road and in Athi River Town.

Says a confident Musya: "We want to ensure that all our members purchase and move into their own houses by the end of our tenure as officials."

Musya's impact is also being felt in the Nairobi County Assembly where she sits in two powerful committees; these are the 19-member budget and appropriation committee; and of the of trade and tourism committee.

She had tried to lobby her 15 male counterparts to elect her as the chairman of the appropriation committee last year, but they turned her down merely because she was a nominated and not an elected MCA.

Budget

Says the Musya: "I always make sure that the health committee gets the highest budget. I use the gender lens when lobbying my colleagues to pass the budget. I thank my committee chairmen for allowing me to act as temporarily chair during some sessions and also to participate fully during debate."

Indeed, as far as the 2/3 gender rule is concerned, only one Committee in

the Nairobi County Assembly has met the gender threshold and that is the Trade and Tourism Committee which constitutes 17 Member; 6 women and 11 men. The rest of the 10 committees have either three or four women out of 18 members.

Asked about her achievements so far, Musya says she has successfully moved two motions in the County Assembly. The first was to compel the County government to set up facilities for sex workers to conduct their business in a designated area without having to patrol along the main city streets at night.

The second one was seeking the formation of peace and security committees in Nairobi for the good of the four million residents.

Challenges

Turning to her challenges so far, the Musya singles out male chauvinism and frustration from the elected MCA as a big headache. There is suspicion, and hostility and outright sabotage from her ward MCA who fears she will vie against him come 2017 polls.

But she has set her eyes on the next elections. "I am already quietly lobbying leaders to support me come the next General Elections when I will vie for the High Rise Ward seat. I am also asking the voters to vote for me."

Zuleikha goes out to turn around lives of young people

BY JOYCE CHIMBI

Hon Zuleikha Hassan's political star has never shone brighter than is the case now. She is among the very few young women Members of Parliament in the current national assembly who are working hard to transform politics and leadership in Kenya.

For her, the participation in politics was not by default. Growing up in Kwale County, she says her father saw the leadership quality in her early enough and nurtured it.

"Were it up to my father, I would have run for a seat in the national assembly in 2007 but I felt that I needed to establish myself before making an attempt to run for a political position," she explains.

Hassan was born in 1979 and as a young Muslim woman fighting to establish herself in the male dominated political arena, she knew that it was not going to be easy.

She also knew that she needed to ground herself on a particular cause around which she would bring change.

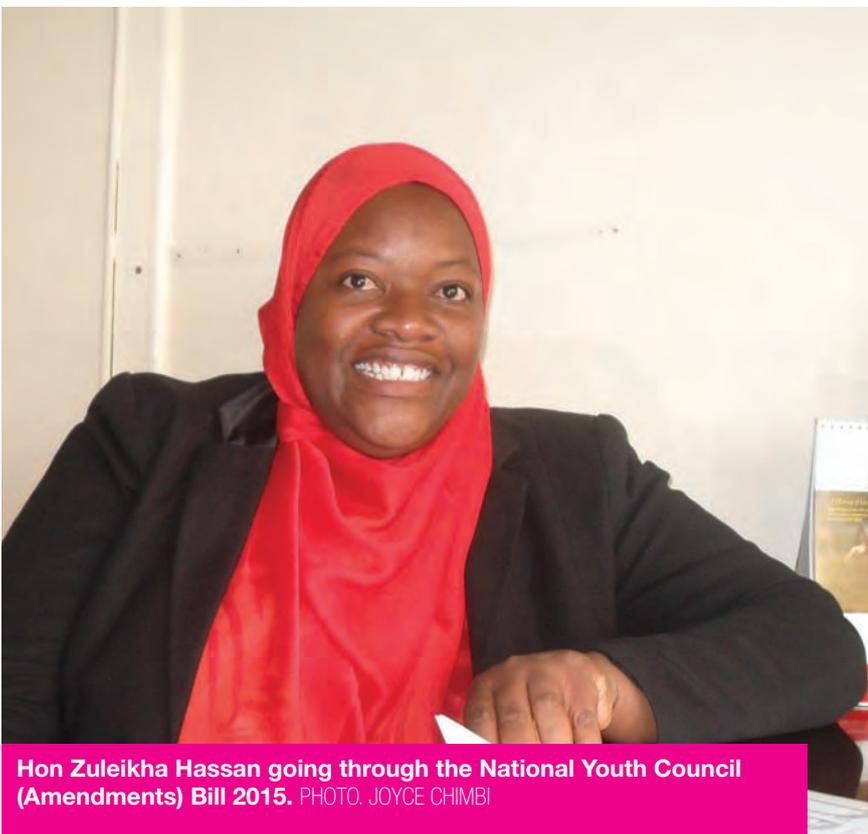
"For me to be taken seriously, I needed to bring something tangible to the political table," Hassan observes.

"While growing up, I had an interest in children, child psychology to be precise; I also wanted to address domestic violence and poverty reduction. But by the time I got into politics, I had decided that my primary target would be youths," she explains.

To this end, Hassan began working with youths in 2,000 and 15 years later, she has made significant inroads among youth groups across the country. This has become a great political asset.

But she also knew that holding meetings with youths and explaining to them about the need to be part of positive social change was not enough.

Upon being nominated to the national



Hon Zuleikha Hassan going through the National Youth Council (Amendments) Bill 2015. PHOTO. JOYCE CHIMBI

assembly, she quickly moved a motion seeking to have the government set aside funds for the National Youth Council, under the National Youth Council Act.

“The youth council is a powerful socio-economic movement scattered across the country, they held their elections in 2011 where over 10,000 participated but have had nothing to do because they have no financing,” she explains.

Her motion received overwhelming support with Hansard records showing that members of the national assembly were jostling for an opportunity to support it.

Consequently, in June 2013, the government set aside Sh38 million for the youth councils across the country and has done so in subsequent budgets.

Milestone

Though a major milestone, Hassan says that the money is not enough and is currently working on another motion to amend the National Youth Council Act. This is to make it to be in tune with the current constitution and other laws, which is likely to result in more funds for initiatives run or begun by young people.

The principal objective of the National Youth Council (Amendment) Bill 2015 is to align it with the Constitution in relation to articles that touch on the national government and devolved governments.

The Bill will also seek to compel

the Cabinet Secretary responsible for finance to provide funds for the Council to enable it establish branches for easy access to services by the youths in the country.

Hassan says that if the youths are the future of this country, leaders must invest in them today. When the Bill becomes law, it will be one of her major achievement in parliament.

But that is not all that she does and youths are not her only constituent. She is also working with women to improve their socio-economic status. Being a member of two national assembly Committees, the Agriculture Committee as well as the Powers and Privileges committee, she is putting her experiences to good use.

“In Kwale for instance, I have invested in drip irrigation kits for women and youths in order to improve agriculture. So far the projects have picked up and they are to sell their produce such as tomatoes on commercial basis,” she says.

Partners

She says that she hopes to draw in more partners and sponsors in order to reach even more people. But Hassan's journey is not all about success, she has faced her fair share of challenges.

For instance, she says nominated women are viewed differently, yet they are making a great difference in positions they are service. Those

who were elected feel they have resounding mandate that the nominated members.

She also says that a lack of preparedness has made it difficult for her to achieve the level of visibility that leaders such as Hon Millie Odhiambo and Rachel Shebesh enjoy.

“Before the 2013 elections, my energies and focus were on getting nominated which in itself very difficult to do, I therefore found myself catapulted to the national assembly with no clue on how things run,” she explains.

Prepare

“There are a few tricks that politicians have to do to improve their profile in the national assembly and it has taken a bit of time for me to learn them,” she adds.

Looking back, Hassan wishes she had taken some time to prepare and to particularly acclimatize herself with the Standing Orders. This would have greatly improved her participation in the National Assembly.

Nevertheless, Hassan says she is confident that her record so far speaks for itself particularly in her contribution to improve governance, democracy and development in Kwale County and beyond.

Though she is mum about what position she will go for come 2017, she is emphatic that “my name will without a doubt be on the ballot.”

Let my track record earn me a seat, says Kagi

BY ODHIAMBO ORLALE

For Wairimu Kagi there is no doubt that patience pays. She plunged into politics 13 years ago campaigning for Kanu's presidential candidate, Uhuru Kenyatta, who lost to Narc's Mwai Kibaki.

But she did not lose hope and continued to work behind the scenes as she bid her time.

After lying low for a decade, she again rose to campaign for Kenyatta's second stab at the presidency, in 2013, on a Jubilee Coalition ticket, and was glad when he won this time round.

Patience

Kagi's patience and efforts were later rewarded by her party with a nomination to the Kiambu County Assembly, where she is a member of two committees: agriculture, livestock and fisheries committee and of the youth, sports and communications committee.

Her star has been on the rise since then and early this year she was elected by her colleagues to be the organising secretary of the Kiambu Women MCA Caucus to promote their gender agenda.



Wairimu Kagi during the interview.
PHOTO. GEORGE NGESA

Their objective is to get a forum and platform to articulate gender issues dealing specifically with women and children. They are also seeking to ensure that they get visibility in the media and that the voice of the women leaders, both elected and nominated, are heard on issues and not on sideshows.

As the leader of the caucus, Kagi plans to use her lobbying and mobilization skills to influence policies and legislation that will improve the lot of fellow women, youth and the disabled in her county.

Learning the ropes

Having learnt the ropes, she now has her eyes on an elective seat come 2017 polls saying that she believes that women leaders should use the 2/3 gender rule as a springboard to higher elective posts and not to cling on to it forever.

Looking back with pride, Kagi says her first taste of politics was while she was at St George's Secondary School next to State House Nairobi, when she led her schoolmates on a strike over badly cooked food.

She was suspended for standing up for her rights, but looking back, she says she has no apologies to make. Since then, she has worked as a social worker with the youth in Mathare and Kariobangi slums under a United Nations sponsored anti-drugs and alcohol abuse project dubbed, Maisha (Life).

It was during that stint that she came face to face with the challenges that the youth are facing, especially those who are alcohol and/or drug addicts.

Her together with others have ensured that the victims had one meal a day and a central place where they could take a bath and watch televisions so that they are away from the drug dealers and fellow addicts.

She was also part of a team who went around the informal settlements holding public awareness campaigns appealing to the youth to keep off drugs and for those who are involved to go for rehabilitation.

Contribution

Fast forward to 2013, she knew her contribution to the party would earn her nomination. Things did not go the way she thought. Even after having her name on the list, some wheeler-dealers still tried to frustrate her from getting the coveted seat.

In fact one politician went as far as trying to bribe her party officials to replace her name with one of his choice, but it back fired.

"I had nightmare about the nomination seat, we had several party lists which were presented to the Registrar of Political Parties. I was on the first list and I fought hard until I got the nomination by merit,"

she says with pride.

The fight was not easy, they lacked funds but had to file a class suit to ensure that the 2/3 gender rule was followed to the letter.

Says Kagi: "Most of the women, like me, who were nominated as MCAs, came through merit contrary to claims by our rivals that we used other means to get to the County Assembly. As an MCA, I have been fighting for the people and also for my party; I have to balance between the two. At times we feel that we are between a rock and a hard place when voting."

Passion

Having a passion for the youth, she says she has used her office and influence in the county assembly to promote youth-friendly policies and legislation. Her background as a social worker who used to work with the youth in Nairobi's informal settlements has come in handy.

"As leaders, we must be very sensitive and articulate on how we deal with our youth, who are the majority," she says.

She hopes the investments she putting in place and the support she is providing to her constituency, will pay off in the 2017 elections. She says she will be seeking an elective post in Kabete constituency, but prefers to keep it under wraps until 2017 for fear of being harassed by the incumbent.

