



Sunday, April 7, 2019

# young nation

## Painting pictures with words

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**G**abriella Mukisa is a confident and an exceptional spoken word artist. The 17-year-old connects with the audience with every word she speaks.

The Aga Khan Academy student is effortlessly moving when she gets on stage.

The teen recently performed at the school's third official TEDx event. Through her spoken word, she explored individuality, noticing the pieces of herself that make her who she is while expressing the beauty of being alone.

She says that if one takes the time to truly

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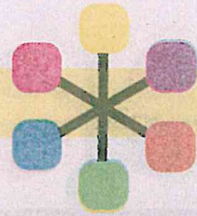
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MWORIA



# Keeping it real with spoken word

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notice, accept and their strengths and weaknesses, they can learn to appreciate the life around them.

Gabriella also performed at Mombasa County Drama festivals and won in her category, Spoken Word.

"I am going to the nationals. I presented a piece on myself. That is about embracing who I am as a person and who I am going to be," she said.

She also presented her piece at MAD Night, a concert held at the Academy and got a certificate.

During the interview, she said being away from Uganda, her home place made her want to do things that reminded her of home.

"I have been in the school for five years. In order to cope with being so far I had to find a way to remind myself of home and the way I did that was to express myself through art and drama," said Gabriella.

"That has brought me closer to home and also allowed me to be myself."

Art, she says, reminds her of her place as an individual in the world of diversity.

## Monologues

"It is important for someone to be themselves because you cannot depend on other people to tell you who you are. Others have a different upbringing from yours so if you do not know who you are, you will get lost," she said.

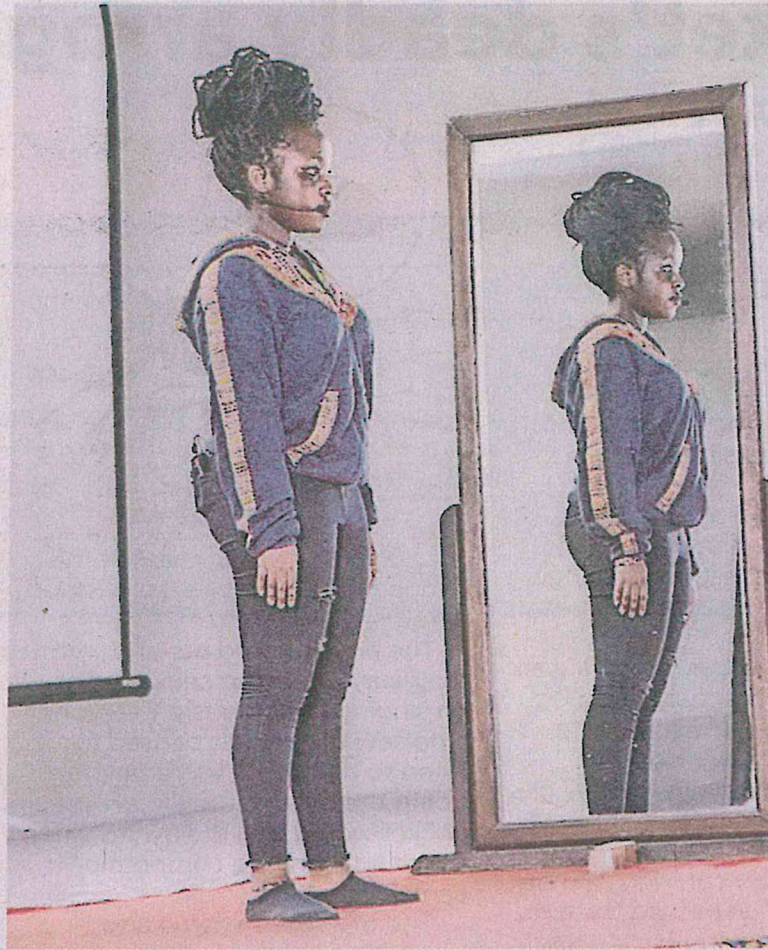
Gabriella started doing monologues in 2017.

"You are on stage talking to yourself but it is like you are reaching out to all this different kinds of people and they can be inspired or relate to what you are saying," she said.

She watched a fellow student do the same on stage and realised that is what she wanted.

To build her skills, she follows spoken word and poetry artistes on YouTube.

She chooses a subject based on real-life experiences and her defining



Gabriella Mukisa performs during the third TEDx Youth event at the Aga Khan Academy Mombasa.

moments.

"I feel it has a greater effect and impact when I talk to myself. If I have just gone through something. I talk about that."

She speaks to the mirror something she says gives a reflection of her younger self.

"At the Tedx I was talking to my younger self about giving me some space. I was telling my younger self to give me some space. It is time for me to move forward and in order to do that I need to let go of the belief that other people need to define who I am," she said.

She raises awareness on the need for young people to be self-aware and authentic.

"There is a line that I used. I am a teenager trying to make it in a world

that wants so badly to fake it. Today, it is so hard to find something real," she said.

Her honesty and vulnerability on stage sometimes feels like she is giving away too much information.

However, she said it is an artistic choice.

"If I am going to be vulnerable in front of people I would rather be vulnerable with the truth than leave them hanging with a half truth," she said.

Gabriella wants to pursue acting as a career. At school, she takes up different roles in the drama club.

"In year 10 I was a lead in a play called *Tune in to Murder*. In another play I was the assistant director of music and choreography. I do different things as I am also interested in singing and dancing," she said.