

By Moses Biakala,

Petwa Kyakuwaire, a 16-year-old girl born without hands and legs, has emerged among the top performers in last year's Uganda Certificate of Education examinations in Iganga district.

A former student of Musana Vocational High School, Kyakuwaire delivered an impressive performance despite the physical challenges she has lived with since birth.

She scored C in English, B in Christian religious education, C in history, B in geography, B in mathematics, B in agriculture, B in physics, B in chemistry, B in biology and a C in project work.

Kyakuwaire had been studying on a full bursary at the school after scoring aggregate 7 in her Primary Leaving Examinations.

Speaking to *New Vision* at her home in Namunbalwe village, Namungalwe sub-county in Iganga district, Kyakuwaire said she hopes to pursue engineering at the university level so she can support the disadvantaged people with free services.

"I have gone through difficult moments to reach this level, and I wouldn't want other people, especially people with disability, to live like me," Kyakuwaire said.

A'LEVEL DREAM

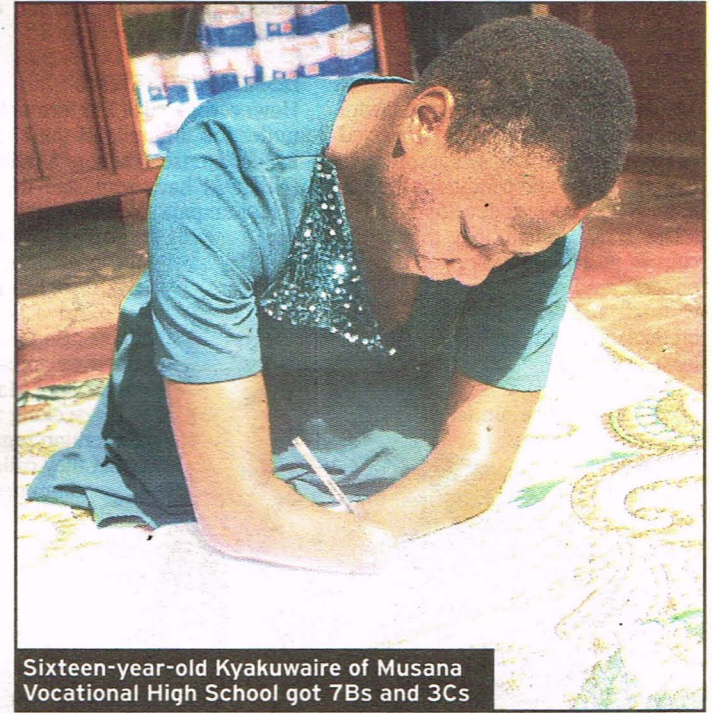
When visited, Kyakuwaire was busy dictating to her aunt a list of items she would need in case a well-wisher offers her an opportunity to join a school for A'level studies. She wishes to join Nabisunsa Girls' Secondary School in Kampala.

UCE star: Born with no limbs, but without limits

PHOTOS BY MOSES BIKALA



Kyakuwaire with her grandmother, Edinansi Nanyama. The learner was among the top performers in Iganga district



Sixteen-year-old Kyakuwaire of Musana Vocational High School got 7Bs and 3Cs

Kyakuwaire, who lost both her parents in a crash at the age of two, now lives with her grandmother.

She fears her dream could stall due to lack of school fees.

"I am afraid that at one time I might fail to make it just because my grandmother lacks money to pay for my tuition," Kyakuwaire said.

She attributes her success to hard

work, determination and the support of her teachers.

"I used to wake up at 3:00am every day, bathe and prepare for early morning prep," she said.

DETERMINATION

Joel Waiswa, the director of studies at Musana Vocational High School, said Kyakuwaire declined to use a

transcriber during her examinations, although it is permitted under the guidelines of the Uganda National Examinations Board for candidates with special needs.

"She insisted on sitting for all her subjects without special assistance, saying she was capable just like the able-bodied students," Waiswa said.

He described her as one of the most

disciplined and academically strong students the school has had since she joined in Senior One.

Michael Nalugoda, the Musana Vocational High School principal, promised to meet the top management to explore ways of supporting Kyakuwaire through her A'level studies and potentially up to university.