

FEMALE SCIENTISTS TELL GIRLS NOT TO FEAR SCIENCES

PHOTO BY AGNES KYOTALENGERIRE

SCHOOL GIRLS CAUTIONED AGAINST SOCIAL MEDIA

By Agnes Kyotalengerire

Secondary school girls in Kiboga district have been advised to avoid social media because it disrupts their concentration on studies.

The message was issued by a team of female scientists during an outreach at Bukomero Secondary School in Kiboga district on Friday.

“Misuse of social media wastes time that you would otherwise have used to do productive work,” the chief executive officer of Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA), Engineer Ziria Tibalwa Waako, told school girls.

Waako said social media has made young girls fall prey to wrong people who lure them into sexual relationships and other human organ harvesting.

She also told the girls to distance themselves from alcohol, substances, sexual relationships and greed for money.

“If you are patient and God-fearing, you will be able to succeed with no doubt,”

FEW GIRLS PURSUE SCIENCES

A huge gender disparity persists in STEM education, with fewer girls than boys pursuing these fields. A 2017 report from Makerere University revealed that only 9.2% of STEM enrolments were by females. Similarly, in 2018, a provisional admission list from Busitema University revealed that only 31% of students admitted into STEM programmes were girls.

Waako said.

The event was organised by the Women in Energy, an initiative led by female engineers to encourage girls to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The members are drawn from ERA, Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL), Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL), Berkeley Energy Uganda, Bujagali Power Limited and the energy ministry.

It attracted learners from six secondary schools that included Nakwayo Secondary School, Katera Trust Senior Secondary School, St

Lawrence Muwanga, Busulwa Memorial Secondary School, Bukomero Secondary School and Bukomero Technical Institute.

Other notable guests in attendance included energy minister Ruth Nankabirwa, Kiboga West MP Keefa Kiwanuka and ERA board chairperson Eng. Grania Rosettee Rubomboras, ERA board member, Dr Rebecca Kisolo.

Through their annual school visits, the Women in Energy team inspires girls to make informed decisions and pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).



Nankabirwa speaking to the students at Bukomero Secondary School on Friday

GIRLS INSPIRED

To interest young girls in the energy sector, girls were advised to study science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects.

“We are here to encourage younger girls to study science subjects that can enable them to serve in the energy sector and sit at the table where decisions that influence their lives are made. This is where it begins,” Waako told the girls.

NANKABIRWA SPEAKS

Minister Nankabirwa, who is a native of Kiboga, said the outreach was timely.

“We have come to wake you up from a young stage to enable you to determine your path, while avoiding things that

can prevent you from pursuing your career,” Nankabirwa said.

She implored the girls to ignore the stereotype that sciences are meant for men.

“We are here to tell you that it is possible; we have walked the journey you are walking,” she said.

Dr Kisolo called for confidence and discipline among the girls as they pursue their studies.

“To persevere means not to give up even when they encounter difficulties. Stand firm and believe in yourself,” she said.

Eng. Rubomboras pledged to mentor girls, especially those who are grappling with addiction.

“If I can reach out and talk to

the lost and they reform. That will be my success,” she noted.

Eng. Rubomboras also advised the girls to work hard and be resilient.

“Do not resign yourself and say mathematics is very difficult. Do not look at yourself and say, because you are coming from a poor family, you cannot make it; otherwise, you will be setting a wrong precedent,” she noted.

The headteacher of Bukomero Secondary School, Saul Ssekanjako, commended the visiting team for guiding the students.

He said, unlike the old curriculum, where girls were discouraged from pursuing sciences, many have embraced them under the new one.