

Meet Irene, The ‘dared’ female Motor Vehicle Mechanic in Tanzania

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: She is one of the young women who can dare to go against all odds when it comes to pursuing a dream. Harboured a dream, but along the way, at 16, was impregnated, dropped out of school, and many thought all was over, and herself at some point believed so.



Irene Erasto at work explaining how she does it.

That is none other than Irene Erasto, now 21, without an income to feed and care for her child was a most difficult story to tell. The 3rd born out of four, explains also, “at that age, I had many dreams, one of them, to become very rich lady through motor vehicle engineering and help my family out of poverty because I have grown see it struggle

for even a daily meal. On getting unexpected pregnancy, all seemed the end. But many community back bites, colleagues’ jeers and isolation, were my blessings in disguise- I was revitalised to recover the dreams’ trail,” Irene further narrates.

In the endeavours to meet the dream, always talked about it in her lamentations, which attracted the ears of her auntie who offered to support and took her to study a six months first Aid and Nursing Aid course at Red Cross, on completion, there was no employment and life remained as before –at home depending on her jobless mother’s handouts.

But on hearing there was a Youth Economic Empowerment (YEE) project starting in Kisarawe, she dashed for an opportunity and luckily enough became one of the few admitted and was enrolled to a long dreamed profession-motor



Irene, in action at Kisarawe District garage

vehicle mechanics course – a widely famed masculine profession in Tanzania. She is the only girl in Kisarawe who joined the course in the first batch against many critics that she won’t manage it.

The merely female mechanic in the district is, against economic, social and cultural norms and exclusions now a motor vehicle mechanic at Kisarawe District council garage, in coastal Region. Irene says is now very comfortable and on truck to achieving the long cherished dream. “I am extremely thrilled of the job. Although I was undermined and criticised by many for my choice of course, I do my work carefully and diligently, many vehicle owners come to see how I do work, they appreciate it and everyone wishes I become his/her mechanic, but because I am working in the government garage, that is not possible at the moment” she articulates.

Irene, a mother to a five year old child, now focuses on making savings through their Youth Savings Association and Loan (YSLA), take care of her mother and the child’s education and invests the change into the same profession to some years ahead become becomes one of the best mechanics in and outside Kisarawe district.



Irene, talking to EU officer, Alexa Haden (Mrs) accompanied by Plan International Plan staff who were in a field visit to YEE project activities

She concludes by hailing Plan International and its implementing associates for helping the marginalised youth in the country including her to access what they were missing because of their family backgrounds. “I don’t have anything to say concerning this support given. Plan is like our parent now, personally will never betray it; I call upon my fellow beneficiaries to do likewise.