

# My Testimony

I was taught to write at a very young age, and although my handwriting was never really that neat, I loved it nonetheless. My handwriting has become way better now, and to add to that, I have my own laptop! So writing has become much easier. This isn't to say that handwriting or 'typewriting' makes a good essay, it is simply to say that from a very young age my God has blessed me greatly! But what truly makes a good piece of writing? In my opinion love and desire make anything worth the read! Before today I would never have written an essay like this. Why? The answer is quite common, because I believed I was way too young to do anything that would encourage positive change. Way too young. This is a mindset that holds many people like me captive. It locks us in a cage and convinces us that we are 'way too young', 'way too dumb' and 'way too inexperienced'. Having been in this cage almost all my life almost becoming a legal citizen of the 'way too' negative state of mind, I must admit that I never thought it was possible to get out of it. I heard it said, "Nothing is impossible with God no matter how long you have stayed in the same place, or in the same circumstance." It can all change in a day, even if you have been going through it for years. This is my testimony today!

I'll start by being honest and straight forward, I didn't know about AKAD until three days ago Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2017. My mom told me about a seminar she would like me to sign up for and attend. I agreed after she gave me a brief description about what it was for. I didn't go on the website because at the time I didn't know it would be useful to me, but one thing I learned today is to ALWAYS go on the website (if there is one) before attending any meeting / seminar. You will not regret it! I say this because the first thing we were asked at the beginning of the meeting was whether we knew the timetable for the session. The first question that went through my head was, "WHAT TIMETABLE!" I bet Dr. Weche could read the panic right off my face! That didn't stop him from making jokes about our unpreparedness! He was teaching me confidence already. His words lit a match to my dreams and set a fire to my imagination as he briefly introduced us to AKAD and told us a little bit about why we were there. (All of which we were expected to know.) He then asked us to introduce ourselves. Our introductions were to include our names and a reason as to why we were worth a 15 million Kenyan Shillings scholarship. This exercise scared me and most of the other people in the group, nonetheless we all gave it our best. Knowing there is a lesson in everything, I learned that being prepared and having a goal are two very fundamental things in life!

I thank God for the confidence He gives His children! Our next speaker was Dr. Angela Gichaga a public sector enthusiast. I liked her from the get go. When given the opportunity, I volunteered to read her profile. She is a very accomplished lady, one I would love to fashion my life after. A true inspiration to me and many other people I believe. The title of her presentation was "Seizing the Opportunities, Say Yes to Success." Just by the title I knew I would learn many key things. Which I did. She gave us an opportunity to sit in groups with different people to discuss three short, but very important. One of them being, "What problem do you want to solve?" the various answers to this questions fascinated and challenged me, to think deeper. She gave us very many good tips on how to seize opportunities and say yes to success, but the one thing that stood out to me was the fact that you don't have to have everything you need and be fully prepared, to start making a change. She taught me to try without the fear of failure. She was a true example of a woman who was confident and sure of herself

Apostle Paul the author of the book 1 Timothy (and 12 other epistles), wrote in chapter 4 verse 12 “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” Dennis Kageni our third and final speaker, was a man who I believe this scripture would have been written about. When I first saw him, and with the heavy but honest praise Dr. Weche gave him I thought he could not be a day younger than 30! My assumptions were soon crashed when he was asked whether he had attained his under graduate degree and his answer was, “No, I’m only 19 so...” this shook me to the core! He had accomplished so much for a man his age. He gave us very important details about Minerva Schools at KGI; he also gave us some important ‘leakage’ (Advice) about preparing and sending applications. Something he said that stood out me was, we choose the information we want to be known about us when sending an application. He taught me that it is never too early to start making a difference, and setting a positive example.

Overall I had a great afternoon and I would not have been anywhere else with anyone one else! My biggest take home was, don’t wait to have everything you need to begin just start and find the rest on the way. What I plan to do having learned this very important lesson, is start an anti-bullying club in my school. I do not have the required education or the required supplies, but I do have the determination, passion, and love for it; I will do my best with what I have.

I have created two posters concerning bullying (Last two pages of this document.) , and I plan to talk to the principle tomorrow (January 18, 2017) about putting them up on the notice board to begin raising awareness. My ultimate goal for this project, is to make my entire school a safe space. A safe space is a place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm. Eventually I would like to take the idea of safe spaces to different schools around Kenya and In East Africa. I believe school should be an enjoyable place for all people no matter how different they are.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Weche, Dr. Angela, Dennis and their whole team for this lovely opportunity. I look forward to many more! I am even more grateful to God for using these people as tools to break me out of my negative mindset, and guide me into thinking like a leader in one afternoon! This is my testimony.



My Name is Semo Maleche.



This is me and my new friend Ian. He wants to be a Software Engineer who brings change to Kenya. I look forward to working with him in the future.