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AKAD ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP FORUM 2018.

Being a youth, in this day and age where the mind can never be possibly idle, can be overwhelming. What with a plethora of options present to engage the ever agile youthful mind, productively or not; the creative ability of a youthful mind is thus immensely increased. An individual's ability to positively channel the same, goes a long way to determine their future success and actualization of goals and ambitions. Opportunities, such as the entrepreneurial leadership conference held at Bidco Africa, on the 19th of June 2018 by AKAD Africa, are as rare as they are critical and a welcome influencing factor towards enabling youth productivity.

The brains brought together for the 13th AKAD mentorship conversation, was nothing if not awe-inspiring. The session got underway with Nyawira Thumi, a dedicated AKAD Psychologist mentor, taking us through emotional intelligence. An individual's ability to recognize emotion both their own and others', discern and identify appropriately each emotion and eventually utilize the resulting information to guide behavior and thought while adapting where necessary to attain set goals. It is after all, by understanding emotional complexity, that one is able to deal with the challenges that come with it: depression, stress, poor anger management among others.

The second session had peer mentors and AKAD associates, James, an alumnus of Lenana School and Ernest Omondi, the guest of honor, an alumnus of the Alliance High School, share their educational experiences and the importance of innovativeness and creativity in making the most of opportunities available to them. Both James and Ernest, having impressive academic achievements under their belts, have secured chances to study abroad. James joins Duke University in August whereas Ernest has spent two years studying computer science at Harvard University. I was especially impressed and inspired by the determination of these young people. Their achievements, an impetus for me to pursue my own dreams and ambitions, having in mind that prioritizing innovativeness and creativity can make an approach to achieving my goals unique! Moreover, the admirable clarity of both purpose and visions they both had, was a welcome call to action for me to sharpen my own.

TRM, the CEO of Bidco Africa, had an empowering message to share in the next session. His insights on entrepreneurship and making entrepreneurial decisions were especially eye-opening. The need to seize present opportunities to build on and the importance of endeavoring to impact positively on others as leaders in the society. Rosemary Wambui, a devoted AKAD mentor, echoed similar sentiments as she spoke of rising above. Embracing youth leadership in its entirety as future entrepreneurial innovators.

Dr. Vimal Shah, the chairman Bidco Africa, joined the group for the afternoon session where he shared his entrepreneurial journey. At the core of establishing and successfully running an entrepreneurial venture, he noted, is above all else, embracing change. Bidco Africa, a case in point, has undergone monumental

changes in its operations successfully over the years. All while maintaining high quality organizational performance and net profits with annual turnovers of USD 500 million. Being enthusiastic and determined are vital skills, necessary to ensure visionary and successful future leaders. As a leader, Dr. Vimal Shah is very passionate about empowering the youth to take up leadership opportunities in entrepreneurship. The youth should strive to, not only seek to make change happen but also be at the forefront of said change.

Scola Kayugira, an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and Mr. Ongwae, also an advocate of the High Court of Kenya, were the penultimate mentorship speakers of the day. Mr. Ongwae, also Scola's mentor, was very passionate in his delivery on undertaking all responsibilities zealously while also challenging oneself to take on more. Career fulfillment, comes with pursuing what one is passionate about and creating opportunities to empower and give back to others. Often times I am not keen and content to complete a task at hand without the desire to challenge myself to give extraordinary effort to it. This session reminded me the reward of pushing my boundaries, to do more and become outstanding.

A session on branding and proper representation led by Boniface Omina, the youth moderator and AKAD associate from Lenana School, marked the successful completion of the 13th AKAD mentorship conversation session.

At the end of the day, I had a clearer view of what entailed successful entrepreneurship and more importantly entrepreneurial leadership. My capability as a youth to take on innovative entrepreneurship and leadership positions, identifying opportunities and seizing them without hesitation, was challenged. The importance of appreciating every chance presented to learn from peers and mentors alike, embracing change to move beyond comfort zones and exploit my potential. At the core of it all, when it's all said and done, as a youth with endless potential and opportunities to change, the question then arises, "How ready and willing am I to step up and lead the change?". I am greatly honored to have been a part of such an insightful seminar and look forward to being a part of more of the same.