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Be the Change

I am a final year student at The University of Nairobi, pursuing Bsc. Environment Conservation and Natural Resource Management. I have a Diploma in Project Management from St. Paul's University. I am passionate about conservation and social work.

This being my first AKAD event to attend, I had my reservations about my suitability attending an engineering themed seminar. I must say deciding to attend this seminar was the best decision I ever made in the recent past. My fear of not fitting in was eliminated with the introduction games led by Mercy and Gitonga, Angaza group.

Esther, Story Moja, enlightened me on the VIPS; Values, Interests, Personality and Skills that can be used to guide one towards a career choice. These VIPS categorize careers into six categories, RIASEC, based on ones interests. The careers are based on ones traits of being a Realist, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterpriser or Conventional. I fall under three categories, SEC. From her, I learnt that it is important that I learn various skills that make me more flexible to fit various categories.

Ernest Ochieng', an AKAD mentor gave his very encouraging testimonial of his growth with AKAD. His story of struggle, perseverance and success, the eventual acceptance into Harvard, encouraged me to be patient and to work hard towards achieving the goals that I have for myself. His guidance on the application process to International Universities helped me look beyond the complications that I associate with the long process.

Francis, an AKAD mentor gave guidance on the process of personal branding with an aim of marketing oneself and career as a brand. The process begins with understanding one's authentic self, that is, weaknesses and strengths. He encouraged us to participate in speaking engagements, interviews and building an online presence. He also emphasized on focusing on remaining a student of one's chosen industry, so as to learn new things and grow within the chosen career path.

Kenya Power staff gave insights on different departments and their functions in the organization. Engineer Andrew analyzed growth through three phases; the adventurous phase, foundational phase and growth phase. He singled out discipline and being principled as very important traits. Engineer Kipkemboi, a nuclear energy engineer enlightened us on the benefits and prospects of producing nuclear energy in Kenya. His academic journey was quite impressive.

Mr. Nyamboga, a software engineer at Oracle emphasized the need to be responsive to change, summarized in a quote "It is not the strongest species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive, to change". He pointed out that for every problem observed, there, exists an opportunity.

Sensei David Mulwa engaged us in practical survival tips to survive a terrorist attack. I feel better equipped to respond effectively in the event that I find myself in such a situation. Teddy

Warria's passion to see young people succeed was a memorable moment. His being aware of current events from different sectors challenges me to be more aware of my surrounding and to seek general knowledge of the state of the world. His success makes him someone I look up to as a role model. Emmy equipped us with negotiation skills the most important one being to never negotiate on an empty stomach. He pointed out that one should not negotiate from a point of need but rather point out the value they add to the deal. Fatuma Mohamed educated us on common soft skills that make one sociable. She also gave insights on what makes a leader especially traits that one should possess to come off as emotionally intelligent.

The three days spent at the seminar have been a source of inspiration for me. I feel that I have been living below my maximum capacity. It has been three days of awakening and realizing that existing within a comfort zone limits my growth. Success stories such as Ernest's point to the possibility of achieving success with hard work and perseverance. I realize my lacking in public speaking and this forum has been one in which I feel I have improved through the three days and the numerous time I curbed my fear of speaking and tried it out. Various speakers enlightened me on the need to understand myself so as to understand what I want for myself. I became aware of my need to discover my true self and to work towards building myself to achieve my dreams. I also learnt of the need to be a person that makes things happen and not to watch them as they happen. I am also aware of the need to be professional and to present myself in a way that makes me be noticed and remembered. Survival skills taught me to be self aware, of my surrounding and the people around me. Angaza group exercises enhanced my team work skills. They also built my confidence in participating in group exercises and enjoying the experience as well.

The impact I have experienced in the seminar has influenced me to be more ambitious. I need to dream bigger, set bigger goals for myself and dedicate myself towards achieving them. I also like

the spirit of mentorship that is a pillar of AKAD. I will work towards bettering myself so I can get to a point where I can mentor others and help them grow. I will be more aware of opportunities that are presented before me and take them up. I will be the change that I wish to see and not come up with excuses as to why I cannot do the things that I am supposed to do. I feel the need to work towards availing this chance of mentorship to students in my former high school, Precious Blood –Kilungu, because this has been an eye opening experience. I would love for them to get the guidance towards suitable career choices and personal growth, like I have.

This mentorship seminar has been an enlightening and growing moment for me. I see my untapped potential and I commit towards exploring this potential through engagement with AKAD.