

KENYA POWER SEMINAR

MENTORING FUTURE ENGINEERS



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The event held by Kenya Power in partnership with AKAD Africa was an eye opener into the world of engineering following the NYS engineering school tour I had attended not long before. It was an all in one event considering the 2 day time frame instead of the usual 3 days. The event completely expounded all I needed to know about engineering and for that I give them an A+.

I was personally handling the registration bit and it was a big honour that was bestowed upon me. The turnout was great and I was registering people who came in as late as 9 a.m. and as early as 7 a.m. Something I benefitted from working at the registration table was that I was able to meet all the important speakers and share a word or two with them as compared to just sitting in the background. I also got to talk to Randy Wambui, whom I thought was a very serious professional but I came to find out that she is actually a very humorous person who is good company.



The location of the seminar

One of the speakers whom I enjoyed listening to was Andrew Chief who gave a talk on how he landed at engineering. He originally wanted to do medicine but missed it by a point. His next option was law but he was overqualified. He therefore chose a career according to his grades and landed in JKUAT doing engineering. That to me emphasized the importance of having a plan B, C and so forth in order to avoid getting stuck in situations where you have no idea what to do. You would rather be spoiled for choice than clueless.



Christie as she does the registration

Succeeding him was Fatuma Mohamed, a female engineer! (Who are very few) She talked about engineering especially for women and the opportunities available not only in the handy work of engineering but also in the management aspect of it.

I had an opportunity to sit with her during lunch and she talked about the challenges she faced on campus as she did her degree in engineering. She went through a lot of trial studying engineering because she was a girl and also a Somali Muslim. Because of that, her classmates and lecturers looked down on her. If it was a case of cheating, she would always be a



Derek Bbanga during his talk

suspect. She would be teased because of her dressing 'The one with a curtain on her head'. But as we spoke, she was in a sense laughing it off. Her classmates were urging her to drop out but she stood her ground. She portrayed a picture of never giving up and knowing your purpose wherever you are and the reason that you are there.

I think one of the most memorable and well-dressed speaker was Derek Bbanga. He gave off a lasting impression not only to me but I think everyone else. He talked about branding, first impressions and standing out. I believe what he said is the

ultimate key to be able to start being considered to top institutions like our peer trainers who have been accepted to; ALU, Stanford and the likes.

Our intellectual capacity was really challenged by Teddy Warria when he asked us simple yet difficult questions like area codes of East African countries. Something that was far from what I had imagined. Something I really admired about the event was the speaker's down to earth policy. They were very humorous and dealt with things that we could easily understand. I remember when Dr. Weche challenged us about our smartphones. Most of us have smartphones but they are not using them properly. Simple things like Google were not being used, even the issue of area codes, we had to be reminded to Google the answers! I walked out with a lesson for sure, sometimes we have the opportunities right under our noses but we are not taking advantage of them.

I will not forget when Dr. Weche threw me into the deep waters by asking me to share something on what I did for my school regarding problem solving and leadership. At first I was nervous but soon after I found new confidence and was able to talk easily. That skill of public speaking I have achieved it through Akad and I am eternally grateful to them.



Christie as she gave her talk

I really enjoyed the seminar; I met new people and learnt so much that I am sure will help me a lot. I do not regret waking up at 6 am and the fatigued evenings, they were not in vain. I look forward to many more seminars like this.

Thank you,

Christie Weche