

MY JOURNEY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



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Life is not merely designed for our survival, but it has been designed for us to thrive through passion, compassion, and creativity. As I write this article on my bed in Boulder, Colorado I am filled with joy and gratefulness for the time I invested into making my gap year worthwhile. After completing my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education at The Lenana School-a top tier high school in Kenya- I made a firm decision not to jump from high school right into university without investing some time to build a stock of highly effective habits and skills, build my social and personality attributes, diversify my knowledge and most importantly work on the things I am passionate about. AKAD Education Group took me through the tough process to develop myself holistically, but as I sit on my bed in the quiet sleeping hours in Chautauqua Park, I can only express gratitude to my parents who embraced my decisions, and the wise ladies and gentlemen who committed their time, resources, and energy to teach me the ways of life and invest in my ideas.

Joining Pacemaker International as a volunteer teaching assistant was one of the major decisions I made this year. I felt a great urge to give back to the community through promoting community education as a way of becoming more open-minded to societal issues that young children face in marginalized communities. Kawangware Primary School- a school that hosts over 2200 children representing over 1000 households in Kawangware slum- is a place I call home because of the life-changing experiences I went through. The school was faced with many challenges that needed intervention, but I sieved out the most pressing issue, which was lack of adequate water supply due to a non-functional borehole pump. The school depended on an inadequate weekly supply of water from water tankers within the slum. This issue broke my heart. It was difficult for me to accept that the children would study in school without full access to basic necessities such as water.

During this time I was part of the gap year program offered by AKAD Education Group in which I was taught skills such as strategic leadership, negotiation, business development, team building, relationship management, and productivity management. Equipped with all the theoretical knowledge I took it upon myself to practice what I was taught through the close intervention of my mentor Rev. Dr. Julius Weche who introduced me to the Chief Executive Officer of East Africa’s Water Solutions Company, Davis & Shirtliff, Mr. David Gatende. It is through this network that I expressed the problem, solution, value proposition and sustainability of the initiative that I planned to begin in Kawangware Primary School. “Maji Kwa Wanfunzi Borehole Rehabilitation Initiative” was conceived after Davis & Shirtliff accepted to undertake a borehole rehabilitation CSR project in Kawangware Primary School worth \$7000. Davis & Shirtliff was able to provide top-notch equipment and borehole services that led to the successful completion of the project this year. Through this project, we were able to fulfill 9 sustainable development goals and sustainably impact over 2200 pupils representing over 1000 households in Kawangware. This project taught me a lot of things that I was not cognizant of. I had to be the leader on-site, and give feedback and guidelines based on the knowledge I had from project management. Despite the challenges I faced, I learned how to set targets, dates, and standard routines to manage the project meticulously and hold the school to high standards.



Photo with Mr. David Gatende and Rev. Dr. Julius Weche

Having completed this project and seen the impact, I have a great urge to impact other schools and inspire willing youth to accomplish great causes in their communities; with the hope that this will create an enabling environment for quality education. It still remains my goal to lead such projects and open more partnerships with companies that desire to give back to the young generation. To date, I am still grateful to the people like Rev. Dr. Julius Weche and Derek Bbanga who have directed me, coached me, and supported me to pursue all the aspirations I have for my country. I am currently at The Watson Institute, undertaking a four-month business incubator program focused on social entrepreneurship alongside 29 other scholars from 20 different countries. It is my aspiration to partner with companies that are willing to build socio-economic capacities that provide solutions to societal issues we face as a country. Let’s make Kenya great!



Students of Kawangware Primary School celebrating the accomplishment of the borehole rehabilitation project by Davis & Shirtliff



Picture with the David Bolo, Rev. Dr. Julius Weche, Nur Riday and the other key stakeholders from Davis & Shirtliff