



Name: Mary Wanjiru Mwangi.

Age: 18 years old.

Email: marrymwangi8@yahoo.com

Facebook: Mary Mwangi (Shiro)

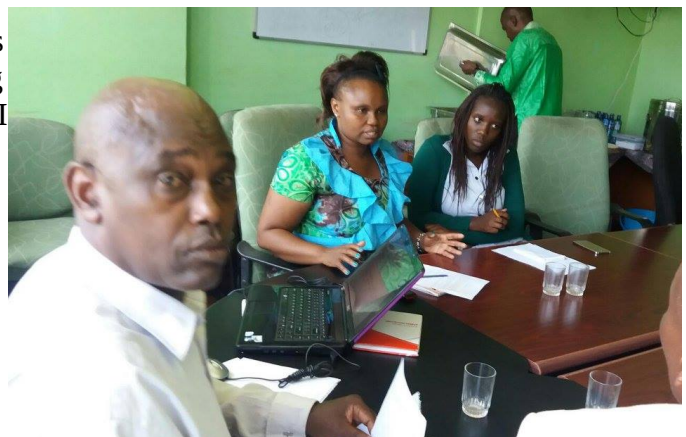
LEADERSHIP IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS AT THE NARC KENYA HEADQUARTERS.

When I was in grade four, I decided to run for a position in the student council. I successfully made it and was assigned to the Spirit Days department. My job, together with my fellow colleagues, was to plan for activities on days such as Halloween and Valentine's day as well as come up with a couple more such as Pajama Day and Beach Day in a competitive yet fun manner. Later, in grade six, I decided to run again. I had left elementary school and was in my first year in Middle School. Deciding to start with a bang, I led a campaign in my advisory class to be the class representative. There were five advisory classes in the grade and each could only produce one representative to join the student council. This was not like in elementary school where the positions were not as limited hence there was more competition. My opponents were Holly Rabson and Dae Young Kim. Unfortunately, I lost to Holly. That put an end to any other political affairs.

Presidential elections in countries never get me as heated up as they do with the majority of the human race. This is not to say that I have no interest whatsoever. I simply do not make it my life's ambition to follow politics as political analysts do. To me, politics is a dirty game, full of backstabbers and hate speech. I often wonder why people choose to dedicate their lives to being insulted publicly. When Dr. Weche, group leader of AKAD Group and the Education Secretary of NARC Kenya, invited Mike Farad, a fellow peer mentee, and I to attend a meeting held at the headquarters of NARC Kenya, I laughed inwardly to myself. He was joking, right? No. He wasn't.

The Jews read their books from behind and finish it at the front. One opens the right most page and flips until he or she reaches the left most page. Quite different from what we, Kenyans, are used to but should you try to read a Hebrew book, you will understand this. I would also like to do so as I speak of what took place at the NARC headquarters in Woodlands Road, Kilimani. This is because it was not until the end of the meeting that I found out who was leading the discussion I had just taken part in: The Center for Multiparty Democracy. I did not even know who they are and what they do until I asked Rosemary Wambui, an adult mentor at AKAD, for more information.

The theme of the discussion was women in leadership. Before sitting down to have lunch, we had been asked to split up into groups and discuss some questions concerning gender financing regulations. What are the realistic



My group member, Tabitha, ferociously defends her idea.

reforms that your party can initiate in relation to such regulations? There were four questions but this was the one that led my group into a major conflict.

An idea to have a fundraising for women to raise funds was laid out but when another member of the group pointed out the flaws in the idea, it became a cat and mouse tussle. I was shocked by all the bickering and as I tried to resolve the conflict, I was reduced to a small fish in an ocean with nothing but sharks. The irony is, when the time for presentation came, our group gave the shortest presentation. After bickering for almost twenty minutes and holding up the following activity, our presentation was less than a minute long. I hurried to post this on the Mentorship Conversation group on WhatsApp with members of AKAD Group and was informed that I was beginning to learn the art of tolerance.

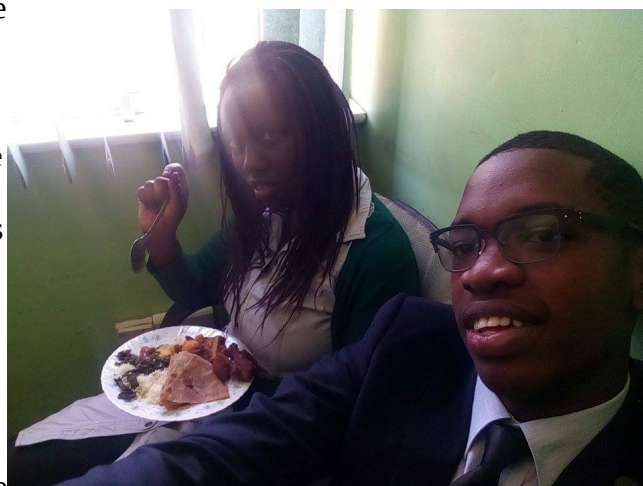
The whole day however, was not spent in such a foul mood. There had been an interactive forum with everybody in the room, prior to the group discussions when I was able to share my view on women in leadership. It followed tremendous applause and I felt pleased that in a crowd of leaders in the government, I could speak and be listened to. My view on politics changed then. Possibly, not all politicians are the animals the media paints them to be.



I spoke out saying, "Men may be the heads of families but women are the managers!"

Female political figures in the room shared about how they felt discriminated by men when stepping up to the position of leadership. A “mheshimiwa” said that he finds it sad that as a politician, he has to be threatened and his family as well when opting to do the right thing. Such stories prompted me to look up Honourable Njoki Ndung’u and request for an audience with her. Possibly, I could share some of these stories with her and hear her view. As a citizen, I get information mainly from the media which, I came to realize, omits a lot. I am still far too shy to step into the spotlight that it politics but I am tired of reading into this field of life wrongly. I plan to seek more information and not just wait to hear from one biased perspective.

Mike had a different experience from mine for he did not have any disagreement in his group. He, however, confided in me that he had never been keen on politics either. Why then, would Dr. Weche choose to invite “two clueless youth” to attend a political meeting? I do not wish to hear his answer for I fear more reprimanding as a result of ignorance. I therefore choose to answer it for him.



Awareness is something that the youth lack today. Awareness of many things due to a pampered and ignorant lifestyle. There exists some who choose to be different and venture out to learn about the activities in *Mike and I enjoy a lovely meal and share our experiences.*

their present that has a big impact in their future. I choose to be one of those few people. When I raised my hand to speak in the conference room, everybody stopped talking so as to listen to me. That is the power that young people hold but because most of them lack the appropriate things to say or simply do not understand, they are dismissed as being “jokers”.

I take away, from the political meeting, a different attitude towards my country’s affairs and those of other countries. Dr. Angela Gichaga, an adult mentor at AKAD, once said that the right skills for a job can be taught but not the attitude. It is up for one to instill it in himself or herself. I find it to be shameful that I have a History teacher as a parent but do not comprehend matters of our constitution. I therefore call upon my mother, Rosemary Wambui and Mike Farad to walk with me as I become more knowledgeable and demystify terms and procedures associated with government.

