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A TOUR OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

When you look through the corridor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a corridor that is over one hundred metres long, you will see a beautiful pathway with advertisements for job opportunities with companies such as Google. Dr. Weche, the team leader of Akad Africa, explained this during the first session of the Gap Year Program as he sought to inspire and challenge us to aim high. On the morning of Thursday, the 2nd of February, as I walked through the cemented pathway with flags of the member states of the United Nations on each side, he reminded me that it was the environment that he wanted the youth to aspire to be associated with both in their young age and when older.

The environment was clean, quiet and true to the mission of the United Nations, peaceful. This made me feel as if I had stepped into a monk's sanctuary, the type of places I about in fictional books. There was no honking of car horns, screaming of matatu touts or loud music from buses. though the official colours of the United Nations are blue and white, one ignorant of this fact might have left thinking that it was green. Green was everywhere. Of course, this is because nature but it was staken a step further at place with statues of animals made of plants. How creative!



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The tour began as soon as everybody who had confirmed attendance arrived. Ruth, a lovely young lady was our tour guide. Using complex gizmos that I first thought were walky talkies with earphones, she managed to communicate with us as she navigated through the buildings and landmarks. She spoke of the history of The United Nations and threw a question at us that left most of us, if not all, patriotic. "Why Kenya?" She asked. New York, Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi are the cities that were chosen to host the main offices of the United Nations. Nairobi being the only country in Africa on that list. So why was it chosen yet there are so many other cities, not only Africa but also in the world that would have served the same purpose? I pose this question to you, hoping that it makes the same impact on you as it did on me.

My favourite stop was at the conference room, the biggest conference room in the the United Nations. It is here where the former president of the United Nations, Barack Obama, went and made his speech. His Holiness, Pope Francis, also made a stop there. With the revolving chairs that reminded me of my childhoold on merry-go-rounds at playgorunds, I felt strangely at home. Could I possibly be a budding public speaker? I have never been one to have a fit when asked to speak in

front of many people. Possibly, it was a sign? Eric Kimonyi, a fellow peer mentor at AKAD later spoke about his vision to come back in the future and deliver his speech in that same conference room. It seemed that the room had an effect on more than one person that day.

Past the index finger, donated by Chile as a present we went and before that, we visited the peace pole where my love affair with international languages grew. I discovered that I only knew two of the official languages of the United Nations fluently. I clearly still had work to do. Thus when I arrived home, I downloaded an application for learning languages, Babbel, and spoke to my friends from Russia, France, the Middle East and Asia. I urged them to speak to me in their languages: Russian, French, Arabic and Chinese respectively.

There is a place in the United Nations where great international figures who visit the office plant trees as way of leaving a mark of themselves behind. I had the marvellous opportunity to touch the tree that His Holiness, Pope Francis planted during his visit to Kenya. As we sat down inside and talked as members of AKAD after the tour, many such as Shivon Ninsiima, spoke about coming back to plant their own tree in the same place. That is when an idea came to me! What if we, as the AKAD members, all who have accomplished and will accomplish great things in this world planted our own trees at MOW Sports Club in South C, our second home? I would pitch this idea to Dr. Weche and wait for feedback.



Was the trip worth making? Of course it was! At AKAD, one gets to meet a family, not just friends. There is a lot of fun but it is not all about the laghter. The mentors are always pushing the mentees to achieve much more, to better their best. Having spent the day as Dr. Weche's daughter, I learned a tonne of things. I had the opportunity to meet new people, laugh and even be proposed to at the age of eighteen years old by a man twice my age. To always carry an identification card and most important of all was that even the slightest deed is more significant that the mightiest wish. I spoke to a fellow mentee named Mike Farad and proposed an idea to start what I call the second dream team, with the goal of bringing solutions to the community together under the tutelage of our mentors such as Dr. Weche himself and seek admission to universities abroad. I look forward to stretching myself further.

