



Name: Mike Nyangi Farad

Email: mike21farad@gmail.com

Phone: 0714735474

AKAD 2017 GAP YEAR PROGRAMME

26th January 2017, just another day under the so very hot sun, or so I thought. "Late again! Late again! Late again!" and as Dr. Weche would put it, "That's so typical of you Kenyans, never having the slightest idea of time consciousness" though in my defence, Traffic did happen. But all in all excuses will always remain excuses. And so with my late arrival, my day does begin a little bit off track but I am still determined to catch up and learn with the rest. I try my best tiptoe into the room careful not to spark much of any attention only for my efforts to be thwarted and rendered futile in an instant when daktari takes a notice of me and makes a remark with regards to my poor sense of time consciousness as the typical Kenyan that I am, but no worries I quickly dust myself and get to my feet once again.

"May I introduce Eric and his team...", Dr. Weche had just concluded his opening remarks and was preparing the floor for a spotting group of refined young ladies and gentlemen whom with all due respect did look amazing and at the top of their game. I was so eager to hear from them, so eager to learn from them and when Eric just took the stage and spoke I immediately knew this was the real deal, this is what I had signed up for, a chance to meet the best of the best and become the best I could be. Eric quickly gives a spot on introduction about his foundation, the Students Beyond Classrooms initiative, that simply bedazzles me. I could see the passion that he had for making a difference in the world in his eyes, I could hear it in his voice, he had a dream and he simply shot for it. "How different was I then? Why not try and just shoot for my dreams like he did?" I thought to myself, as I sat there in the midst of the audience tentatively listening to what my peer mentors did have to say.

First to be introduced by Eric was Annabelle Nkirote, a dazzling young lady with this intelligent look written all over her face. She gives a startling brief synopsis of her course through life but one particular aspect of her amazes me, she is a go getter with a vision and a sense of purpose, an aspect of her which actually did prompt her to look for an internship with with KWFT. I actually did love the fact that she was eager to help all those people, women particularly who live in marginalised areas to have a sense of finance and economics. Another aspect I did particularly love about her was her passion for learning, languages especially, that made her enrol for Chinese classes. At some point she actually had one of these light moments with Virginia, an AKAD associate, where they both seemed to speak in "tongues" and the rest of the class had no idea of what they are saying at all,

including me of course. Anyway the zeal I saw in her later prompts me to approach her after the meeting, so that I may get to learn much more about her and just get a view of life from her perspective. The encounter actually turns out to be a fun experience for me, I get to learn a lot about her including the fact that she is phlegmatic which was awesome because well I'm phlegmatic to some extent and for me just getting to know her was a phenomenal learning experience. Annabelle had just finished her introduction but I did manage to salvage one statement from her. She said and I quote, "Time is money, so utilise it well" that got me brainstorming on how well I had utilised my time so far.

Next on stage was Ronny Gichanga, a timid young lad who was a second year student at the Technical University of Kenya. He particularly inspired me on so many levels, first of course being that he was the youngest among all the other peer mentors yet despite this he still managed to find a way just to fit in and just be himself. Another aspect that does inspire me about him was that, just like Eric, the young lad did have a dream and he wasn't afraid of stepping out of the Shadows and just making his dream a reality. At 18 he had already done a spectacular job having founded his own foundation and touched the lives of so many orphans and poverty stricken homes through the work they were doing. And suddenly I couldn't help but feel that I hadn't enough so far to give back to society. I mean with young men and ladies like Ronny always out there ready to make a difference who was I just to sit around and just simply not do the best I could to just give back to the community. One thing that I was sure of at the moment was that one day I wanted to stand proud just like Ronny and say with total conviction that I have made the world a better place. Another thing that did amaze me with him was his zest in leadership. What a great inspiration I did get from Him.

Dorris Nashipae was her name, an intelligent young lady with an inspiring backstory and a dream, she was the next one to speak on stage and immediately she began to speak I knew I needed to learn more of her, she tells of her story. Having been born in a male dominated society that doesn't believe in female education she still manages through with her education and even gets a scholarship for her secondary and university education where she gets to have whole new learning experience having grown in Kajiado for nearly all her years in childhood. She tells of her struggles here and there but eventually managing to pull through it all which to me was a total show of the now common statement "the strength of a woman". In university her most drives her to vying for an elective seat which she doesn't get unfortunately but she still manages to spot a leadership post in the Christian Union. To me she is the epitome of what girl power is all about and I hope she achieves her dream in the long run of empowering the women in her community.

Next were Kennedy Hinzano and Harriet Gisare who sort of shared the same backstory as me, having been raised by a single mom they still manage to rise up to the situation and still just make it through despite the tumbles and turns they faced. And even as I watched them I was reminded of one thing of Hinzano himself that I can rise beyond my challenges and become something great



after all pressure does make something precious, and from Harriet I learn to always be focused on who I want to become and that friends could be your best asset but your biggest downfall as well.

Finally the introduction is over and Eric takes to the stage once more to culminate the session and promises to complete his backstory in five minutes which I didn't believe he would but amazingly enough he did, he tells of his struggles with public speaking and self realisation and just how he got to overcome them. His changing point being after an AKAD event at his former school when he decided it was sink or swim, and he chose to swim by buying himself a mirror with which he practise public speaking until he became our own Malcom X, I must say it seems his practice really did pay off. He also talks of how he got to meet all this fancy names and I couldn't believe it, he actually got to meet the one and only president of this Republic, Dr. Vimal Shah among others. I get to really just look up to him in so many ways and really couldn't thank him enough for the inspiration he gave me. And so Eric leaves the stage having got me thinking hard over his WhatsApp status which says and I quote "All give some, some give all but I give my best" powerful indeed



On concluding his presentation, Dr. Weche once again takes over thrilled as always and his energy once again just blasts through the room. He takes the opportunity to ask us to get to mingle and get to know at least two peer mentors. He as well takes the opportunity to teach us of the importance of dress, confidence, personal branding and the case study method which I found really found quite eye opening and useful. In the process he asks Virginia to talk about a cheese cake she ate in Kempinski, which for your information I now covet bearing in mind the description she gave it was quite just out of this world . I also managed to pick up a word or two in Chinese in the process which was exciting. Dr. Weche eventually invites us for a cup of tea and as usual he goes first, with the claim that we were shy which may have been true for all but me, but do I say. So I immediately take the chance to meet Doris and just get to learn more of her struggles and successes in life just as Daktari asked us to. I get to learn a lot through this encounter and I get to actually just to step in her shoes for a minute or two and I get to realise just how much life may try to beat you down but how important it is to always keep fighting.

Sooner rather than later, Dr. Weche cuts the break short with an exercise. He asks people to stand and give a brief on what they've learnt about the person they had been interacting with all through the day at first of course it does seem like a simple exercise until it proves a hard nut to crack for some people who kept answering a different question, Kennedy Hinzano to be particular who finds it quite hard to get it right. We have a few laughs but he does get a final shot at it and he gets it right finally. After the short exercise daktari goes through some statistics which he got from a survey he asked us to fill. In the process he gets to fill us in on a lot of various issues such as the need for verbal, analytical, qualitative and integral skills for us to capture the attention of some of the people will be meeting as well as the universities we will be applying to. We also manage catch a few laughs here and there especially when he asks if anybody knew what psychometrics is. He also got to share with us about the elevator pitch and let two girls, in on the pitch and let them feel the heat and in the process manages to teach about the four things universities I'll be applying to will need to know.

First being whether I have had any leadership experience, next is whether I have engaged in any form of community service, third is what solution will I be bringing into the world and lastly being my academics. He eventually let's Benazir, who has a dream of joining Harvard and another fine young lady whose name I didn't quite catch who has a dream of joining MIT taste the pitch a bit which proves to be quite the challenge. Well even as the girls tried their best to handle the elevator pitch based on those four pillars I couldn't help but feel like I to needed to be there in the elevator pitch and just get to see how good I was but I held my horses knowing my time would soon come. Soon enough Dr. Weche asked if any body was feeling drawn to his religious side and felt like he or she needed to pray and I couldn't just let this chance by so I dart my hand and with my prayer I close the day's work with a prayer. What a lovely day it was. I left the place inspired, motivated, challenged and hunger in for more. I can't wait for Tuesday.