



Chandaria Education Scholarship Programme Newsletter

A KCDF publication highlighting students who have been supported by the Chandaria Foundation through their Secondary School Education.





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KCDF receives a cheque of Ksh. 3.8M from Chandaria Foundation towards the education scholarship programme. From left- Ms. Janet Mawiyoo-KCDF's Executive Director, Dr. Manu Chandaria-Chair of Chandaria Foundation and Catherine Kiganjo-KCDF's Education Programme Coordinator

Foreword

Chandaria Foundation Education Scholarship Programme in partnership with KCDF was established back in 2006. The programme provides partial education scholarship grants to support students from poor and vulnerable backgrounds through their Secondary School Education. The scholarship fund supports these students through their Form one to Form four studies. KCDF works with intermediary partner organizations (grass-root organizations) to reach its targeted beneficiaries country wide.

Chandaria Foundation has to date disbursed to KCDF a total of Kshs. 30,902,495 over the twelve-year period of the partnership supporting a total of 279 students. In 2018, Chandaria Foundation provided Kshs. 3.8 Million to support a further 35 students in various secondary schools. The programme endeavors to support poor and vulnerable girls' and boys' country wide who lack the resources to further their secondary education.

This newsletter aims at highlighting experiences of some of the beneficiaries who have received scholarships through the generous support of Dr. Manu Chandaria and the Chandaria Foundation. We are not able to highlight all the amazing stories of all the beneficiaries in this newsletter, but we invite you to read more by visiting our website on www.kcdf.or.ke and also find out how you can make a difference by supporting the education scholarship programme.



I want to be able to **change** the way some **things** have been **working in the slums**. I want to **make books** more **accessible** to children **in the slums** so that they do not have to **struggle** to go to book-shops to buy a book.

-Vincent Mathuku Musembi-

“I am from Kibera but I grew up upcountry, Makueni county to be precise, up to the age of six years when we moved to Nairobi. Kibera has been home to me. I have studied there, made friends there, grown into a man there. I went to a school called Olympic primary school. It was tough growing up and schooling in the slum. Trying to read in a small house occupied by many people was always a challenge. I had to juggle books and doing house chores responsibilities. You grow up very fast as a result of these circumstances.”

My mother is a tailor and she lives upcountry. My father is a pastor, therefore we had to live by certain rules and principles. He gave the guidance for the family and with that I was able to make wiser decisions as I grew up. I was also exposed to a lot of workshops because of the church affiliation. I have had the opportunity to work with PLAN International and I have been volunteering with them in some training workshops. When I completed KCPE, I was called to Lenana High School. Given the financial situation at home, my parents could not afford the fees. Thankfully KCDF that administers the Chandaria education scholarship fund stepped in to take care of my fees through Riziki Kenya, an organization my parents approached that is based in Kibera that supports the community and also helps to educate needy children.

Lenana school was a culture shock for me. I was coming from a slum to this big national school with young men from different backgrounds and cultures. Some were wealthy children with influential parents, and it was a bit hard to fit in for the first few weeks because you always feel intimidated. But I tried to be collected as much as possible. I learnt fast. I was aware of my background and I was aware of the opportunity and how lucky I was to be there. It was at this school that my talent for writing was nurtured. All in all, I would say Lenana school was a positive experience for me.

I scored a B- in my final exams which I completed in 2017. I will be joining KCA University to study Bachelor of Science in Information Technology in September. I have always loved the technology world from a very young age. I have always liked interacting with anything technological. It fascinates me how technology works and how it is used by different people to come up with different solutions to various problems that seemed impossible once.

If God agrees, I want to be able to change the way some things have been working in the slums. I want to make books more accessible to children in the slums so that they do not have to struggle to go to bookshops to buy a book.

What I have learnt about life is that, somethings you can't change, but you can change yourself. Once you manage to change yourself you can impact on others because if people see a certain change in you, then they will be attracted to you and also, they will be able to learn from you. I will also not forget to pay it forward just as KCDF supported me through my high school education, I must support a young person the same way.



It was so **painful** to see my mother cry. I have never forgotten it and so **being a doctor** was always to be able to **save** my mother.

~Patricia Cynthia Jackline~

She says very little. Speaks in monosyllables. She sits at the edge of her seat, like a frightened deer. No eye contact. At some point she will cry, a soundless cry. Her name is the first story, all Christian names. “My father is Jonathan Kimandi,” she whispers. “I don’t use his name because I was brought up by my mother. But I keep contact with him.”

She remembers growing up in Taita Taveta, a place called California. “It was cold,” she mumbles staring at the floor. She started school there, but in class eight she transferred to a school in Mtito Andei. For her high school, she went to St. Joseph Girls Secondary School, in Kibwezi. She managed to score a B and was called to attend Mt. Kenya University where unfortunately due to financial constraints, she has not yet managed to join.

“I received support from KCDF through the Chandaria education scholarship fund for my high school education,” she says, “but now I do not have someone to sponsor me through my university since the scholarship caters for secondary school education only. In the meantime, I am working in a farm in Athi River.” She is 19-years of age now. Her sister who is 17-years old, dropped out of school and works with her in the same farm. She says her ambition has always been to be a doctor but since she did not attain the necessary grades she intends to pursue medical laboratory sciences, the closest she can get to step in a hospital as a medic. That dream, as elusive as it may seem now, is rooted deeply in her childhood.

“When I was a child, my mother fell seriously ill,” she says, “I must have been five years old and my sister was three. We were only the three of us; me, my mother and my sister. Everyday an aunt would pass by to clean up and cook for my mother. We were so terrified that she would die. I felt so helpless.” She starts to sob. “I thought she was going to die then we would be left all alone. During this time, she was sick, she kept saying, ‘Patricia, if you were a doctor you would heal me, please read hard so that you become one.’ It was so painful to see my mother cry. I have never forgotten it and so being a doctor was always to be able to save my mother.” She still hopes to wear a white lab coat.



I was **taught** that if someone **holds** your hand, you have to **hold two hands.**

~Jacinta Mwendwa~

What do you remember about growing up?

I grew up in Meru. I have been raised by my maternal grandmother since childhood. I studied in a public primary school in Meru. I performed well in my KCPE then we ran into financial challenges; my grandmother could not raise my secondary school fees where I had been called to Nkuene Girls High School. She asked me to stay at home for one term in order to raise money to take me to an affordable day school. Thankfully, my former class teacher in class eight introduced us to her friend in Riziki Kenya who upon seeing our need was able to present my case to KCDF earning me an opportunity to receive support for my secondary school through Chandaria fund. I was admitted in Makueni Girls High school, received support from form one to form four where I completed, and scored a B+ in my KCSE exams. I am now pursuing a Bachelor's in Medical Laboratory Sciences at Mombasa Technical University.

Where are your parents?

Unfortunately, I never met my father. I know he is around somewhere, but I have never met him. I met my mother once back when I was in high school. I did not know she was my mother. She had come home, and I thought she was just another visitor until my grandmother later mentioned that she was my mother.

What was your feeling towards her?

I wasn't bitter. I didn't know her. I had grown up without her, therefore I didn't have any feelings towards her. I know one day I will meet my father. I am sure he is alive somewhere.

How do you give back?

I have always been curious as to this organization that supported me through my schooling. I visited them and learnt more about what they do. I will definitely be contributing money to them when I start earning a salary. In the meantime, I spoke to my high school principal about mentoring girls in my former school and I have been doing that during my campus break. I was taught that if someone holds your hand, you have to hold two hands. Now I am in university, when I get back to the village I spend time with students, I talk to them about education and about life and I motivate them and give them hope. They want to be in university just like me. They want to follow in my footsteps and my success will be theirs.

What has all this taught you about life?

You need to be good to people because you don't know your fate. I never dreamt of being supported or being in the place I am now, but it's because of organizations and people like Manu Chandaria, KCDF and Riziki Kenya that I am here. It also helps if you are disciplined and humble. I want to support as many needy young people when I am in a position to, either financially or through mentorship. There are many young people with dreams, but their dreams are just wasting away because they do not have people to support them.



The biggest **lesson** I have learnt so far is **about trust and faith**. Having faith in yourself and the people around you.

~George Gichure Kinyanjui~

He remembers the drama that surrounded his father bringing home a second wife and his mother packing up her belongings and leaving with the three of them. They moved from Limuru to Kayole. He changed schools to a public school. His mother started operating small businesses to see them through school.

“She started selling shoes, which did not do very well,” he says, “she then started selling porridge. My life was kind of all over the place. It was around the time I was joining form one and it was tough. She sold porridge for a whole year. I don’t know how she even made it, with three children, one in university, my brother, but he had to fend for himself. Luckily, he got a scholarship with Equity Bank, so they gave him a job, and he could pay for his studies.”

When asked what kind of a teenager he was, he says, “The kind that does not believe in men.” He passed well enough to be called to Kiambu High School, but his mother could not afford school fees, so she found an alternative - Githiga High School. The fees there was also expensive, so they explored the option for a school next door. “To me, this was bad because my high school was right opposite my primary school, Bondeni Primary School.” He says. “I was not interested. I told my mother, ‘I preferred to rather stay at home work for some time, get some money then join form one the following year.’” Luckily, through contacts in his former primary school, they got linked to KCDF who, under the Chandaria Foundation, in association with Global Educational Fund, offered him a scholarship.

He says, “They paid for half my fees in form one up to form four, my mother struggled with the other half. At the end of form three, I had a large fee balance and she could not pay for it. So, she approached Global Educational Fund who paid off the balance.” He scored a B+ in his KCSE and was later admitted to Maseno University to study Computer Science.

“My mother leaving my father forced me into a man earlier than I thought I would have to” he says, “It made me mature and grow up fast.” He is now playing basketball and taking it seriously. He wants to make a career out of it. But in the meantime, as a plan B, he is going to work hard and complete his studies and become a Software Engineer. His life has been about being supported by people, but his mother leaving his father and growing up fatherless seems to take a big space in his life. “The biggest lesson I have learnt so far is about trust and faith. Having faith in yourself and the people around you. After the separation from my father and realizing that even the closest people can turn away from you, I have shut out people, and not in a good way. I went through my high school days not trusting anyone, I kept to myself and refused to let anyone in. I am now working on changing that.”



Because I have been **assisted** a lot in **my journey**, I have purposed to also **help others** like me, girls in poor villages who might not have the opportunities to make something of their lives.

~Florence Katunge Mutua~

Born and raised from a very small village in Machakos County, a place called Muthembwa village. “I have three siblings - two sisters and one brother. My parents are farmers in that desert area as it receives very little rains. My parents have always been farmers. They really struggled to pay my school fees through primary school. But, I worked hard and scored 359 marks and was lucky enough to be sponsored by the Chandaria Foundation through my high school. Were it not for the scholarship opportunity, I do not know what I would have done in terms of pursuing my education. I probably would have stayed at home and worked in the farms like my parents.”

I got an A- in my KCSE and was admitted to the University of Nairobi to do a Bachelor of Science in Statistics. My mother has struggled to see me through to this stage of my life and I am so grateful for what she has done, but also KCDF through the education scholarship has done more than I could ever imagine possible by lifting me from the very low depths.

I want to finish school and work in the private sector and then perhaps run my own business. Because I have been assisted a lot in my journey, I have purposed to also help others like me, girls in poor villages who might not have the opportunities to make something of their lives.

You know, in our village, most of my classmates are married. They have children. They now look like they are 50-years old. It is sad when you think about it; young girls opting for marriage because of lack of education opportunities. However, some of them actually come from well off families, but it's just a bad culture that they are following where marriage seems like the only step to make. When I go back to my village I speak to the girls there. I tell them “that it's possible. It can be done. I did it. Believe in yourself, be strong, don't stop.”



I always **pray** that God keeps my grandmother alive a little longer so that she sees **my success**. I want her to see that because of the **support** I received, I **did something** to redeem my father's reputation.

-Godfrey Githinji Ndiru-

“When I was in class one, my mother died while giving birth to twins.” Godfrey says. “Four years later one of the twins died of leukemia.” He doesn’t remember his mother. But he remembers in class six he came back home to find that his father had taken poison and died. He then moved in with his grandmother in Njoro. The other twin was taken in by his uncle who lived in Kahawa estate. “Life became very difficult,” he says.

He dropped out of school and joined a bunch of small-time thieves. They stole vegetables and fruits. They stole scrap metal. They broke into homes and stole whatever they could lay their hands on.

“I was hungry. Stealing is not justified but some people still need to eat. I was on a bad path in life; hopeless.” Then his uncle sent word that he should come to Nairobi, he had gotten a bursary from a PCEA church in Kahawa. He packed all the decent clothes he could get because he saw Nairobi as a place where people would laugh at your old shags clothes. He started school in Kahawa and was downgraded two classes back.

“I didn’t speak English. All I spoke was Kikuyu.” A faint smile appears at the corner of his mouth. “Other children laughed at me in class.” He had bad clothes. He had a heavy accent. He was different. However, in Nairobi, life began to take a turn. His English improved. His grades improved. But the future still presented gloom. “I prayed all the time. I still start my day on my knees, praying to God,” he says. “I prayed that He would make something of my life, something better than going back to Njoro.” His biggest worry was that he would finish primary school and his education would come to an end.

“When I completed primary school, I was sure that was the end for me, I would end up going to do what I knew; farming. I was so bitter at this point in my life. It all seemed unfair, to come to Nairobi for education then go back to where I started.”

When the KCPE results came out, he had scored 387 points out of 500. That evening his uncle told him he would be sent to the village because he had not made it to enter Starehe Boys. But then God wasn’t done, you know how He is, always waiting to play his trump card when your back is against the wall. He received an acceptance letter to Starehe Boys Center.

“I don’t know how it happened because with my results there was no way I was going to get in, but I did,” he says, “I did not think ever in my life that I would be a student of Starehe. It’s God’s power that took me there, it’s God’s mercy and

grace. I was immoral in Njoro, stealing from people's farms, but it didn't stop God from helping me to change." That night he got on his knees and cried while praying.

At Starehe Boys Center he found a family. "For the longest time I was this young poor boy without any hope and for a long time I felt like I had been forsaken but then when I joined Starehe Boys, I met many other students who were just like me and I thought, I am not alone! My fees was catered for by KCDF, through the generous support of Chandaria scholarship fund. At Starehe I felt accepted with my kind of background." He loved Starehe Boys. He put his back into his studies so as to show God that it wasn't all in vain. "I remember I used to do the chores expected of us better than the rest because I had worked on the farm in the villages, so school work was nothing. The chores were familiar, and I did them so well they wanted to make me a prefect, which I refused because I knew it would distract me from my main focus which was school work."

At Starehe, he learnt to be responsible, to treat people right, to work hard, to have faith, but most importantly to dream beyond the horizon that his dreams had initially reached. "Starehe was like being in this place which represented constant hope because remember that most of us had nothing; we didn't have money, some of us didn't have families. Majority of us were sponsored students. All we had were sponsorships and these teachers who made us believe that we were going to make it in life and all we had to do is study hard." He completed secondary school and the world welcomed him. He scored a B+ and now he is at University of Nairobi studying Industrial Chemistry.

What does he look forward to now? He shares, "I always pray that God keeps my grandmother alive for a little longer so that she sees my success. I want her to see that because of the support I received, I did something to redeem my father's reputation."



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