



MEN

STAND UP TO
BE COUNTED

MENTENDA 
MWANAUME NI KUHUSIKA

A KCDF publication highlighting the success stories of young men who have been supported through the MENTENDA Initiative.

KCDF 
people, giving and working together



**SUPPORT
5 BOYS**

GO THROUGH
MENTORSHIP FOR ONE
YEAR BY PLEDGING

KES. 500.00 PER MONTH

MEN
STAND UP TO
BE COUNTED

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MENTENDA
MEN TAKING ACTION

It is a transformative mentorship and role-modelling initiative targeting young men between the ages 14-25 years to nurture them into confident and responsible men, while unlocking their potential to become leaders in their spaces of influence.

Expected Outcomes

The long-term outcome of the initiative is to see young men (boys) become men of honor who recognize and unlock their potential of being leaders in their areas of influence while displaying confidence, responsibility and a renewed sense of giving back. The short-term to medium-term outcomes from the initiative are improved academic performance and discipline, a higher transition rate through the school system, strengthened family and societal values, youth with strong community connections and volunteerism culture, and enhanced career and life skills opportunities.

Key Partners

To make this initiative successful, KCDF is working with the following partners:

- Ministry of Education and other line Ministries
- Secondary Schools
- County Education Boards
- Teachers Service Commission (TSC)
- Kenya National Association of Parents

- National Commission for Control of Alcohol & Drugs Abuse (NACADA)
- The Media
- The Private Sector
- Other Transformational Mentorship Initiatives led by Public Benefit and Faith Based Organisations
- Host Communities
- Out of School Youth (Male)
- Alumni Associations

Programme Strategy

Working with partners, the initiative has adopted the following strategies:

- Peer-to-peer interactions among and across high school boys.
- Public dialogue through talk show discussions on diverse media platforms.
- Inspirational, motivational and career talks.
- Community and corporate sector involvement through in school mentorship and involvement of old boys (alumni).
- Promoting community service among youth - volunteerism.



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Foreword

Dear Friend of KCDF,

Over the years, there has been growing concern on how the boy child has been neglected having previously benefitted from the warm stewardship of a caring society that provided them guidance, mentorship and direction. With a fast-paced society, globalization and survival for the fittest, this has denied the boy-child in Kenya the all-important direction and equal priority to reach their full potential. As KCDF, we realize that many young men continue to face many challenges which require attention.

In response to these challenges, KCDF through MENTENDA, which is an English/Kiswahili word calling men to action, is inspiring the society to address the challenges facing the boy child in Kenya. MENTENDA is a transformative mentorship and role-modelling initiative targeting young men between the ages 14-25 years to nurture them into confident and responsible men, while unlocking their potential to become leaders in their spaces of influence.

This newsletter highlights some of the young men who have received the much-needed support and stewardship under this initiative, and their journey of success and breakthrough. From a young man who was raised in abject poverty but emerged to be the first actuary from his village; to a young man whose chance of pursuing higher education was almost ruined by cattle rustlers; a gentleman who rose from a herd's boy to become a medic and finally, a young man who was the only one among his nine siblings who got a chance to transition to university and become a graduate.

The long-term outcome of MENTENDA is to see young men become men of honor, who have been molded to be great while displaying confidence, responsibility and a renewed sense of giving back. The short-to-medium term outcomes of the initiative are improved academic performance and discipline, a higher transition rate through the school system, strengthened family and societal values, youth with strong community connections and volunteerism culture, and an enhanced career and life skills opportunities.

Our hope is that you will be inspired by the success stories of these young men who are already making an impact in their spaces. We invite you to read through the newsletter and visit www.kcdf.or.ke to learn more on how you can support this initiative.

Editorial Team

A portrait of Paul Mwangangi Kasau, a young Black man with short hair and a slight smile, wearing a black leather bomber jacket over a white button-down shirt. He is holding a red book with a white geometric pattern on the cover. The background is a blurred green outdoor setting. A yellow rectangular frame surrounds the portrait. The name 'Paul Mwangangi Kasau' is written in white text on the left side of the frame. A yellow arrow points to the left, and a yellow square is located at the bottom right of the frame.

Paul Mwangangi Kasau

Actuarial Scientist
Eldoret

From Poverty to Redemption

Paul Mwangangi, a final year actuarial student at University of Eldoret considers Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF), the organisation that has supported him from high school to university, his second parents.

He said: "I have always been a performer and people assume I am always okay, but KCDF are the only ones who have ever asked me about school, and I appreciate that."

Poverty had kept Paul Mwangangi out of his school of choice - Mwingi High School - to a day school in the same neighbourhood, but after two terms in the new school, he had performed so well that the teachers told him that they would do all they could to take him back to Mwingi.

Amidst a background of abject poverty as an orphan, Paul had gained entry into Mwingi High school and had relied on a male teacher, the deputy head teacher to feed him so as to stay in school.

"He would ensure that I am given food at the kitchen without pay," he narrated.

This all came to an end when the teacher was transferred to another school and Paul was sent home, and Paul had to move to a day school, Katisasi Day School. In the new school, there was no challenge.

"I would be number one, and the second student would have only half my marks," he said.

The teachers at Katisasi looked for alternatives for Paul to go back to Mwingi High School, and when one of them heard of KCDF, he quickly introduced the student to the organisation, and

this is how Paul got an opportunity to explore how far he would go with his good grades.

He quipped: "When I came back to Mwingi, they had even completed the form 2 syllabus, but I caught up. It was hard work, but I did."

For instance, he changed his career choice from accountancy to be an actuary, after consultation with an accountant in his village. Paul said that he was extremely grateful for the visits to school to see him.

He narrated: "One time, he came and saw that I needed a new sweater and he bought it."

After all the help he got, Paul said he vowed that he would go back to the day school that he spent his two terms in to teach.

"I love teaching math, and other sciences especially to the young boys, to show them that I too came from that humble environment and I am here. It is possible," he said, adding that he likes to teach about skills not in the syllabus like time management, revision and discipline.

Paul also likes to spend his time in children's homes, often to play with them.

He just finished his internship at Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH), and is looking forward to joining the industry, and is proud to be the first actuary from his village.

A portrait of Jeremiah Kiplagat, a nurse, standing in front of a health facility sign. He is wearing a white lab coat over a light blue shirt and beige trousers. The sign behind him lists services such as 'OUT-PATIENT C', 'VCT SERV', 'MCH • FAM', '• IMM', '• ANT', '• POS', and 'LABORATOR'. The sign also has 'NJE' and 'MOA SERVICE' written on it. The background is filled with green foliage.

Jeremiah Kiplagat

Nurse
Bomet

From a Herd's Boy to a Medic

At the age of 12, **Jeremiah Kiplagat** had a curious encounter – he fractured his leg while herding cattle and separately fell in love with the nursing career. Owing to the grave injury on his leg, he was admitted for over six months at the Tenwek Mission Hospital, where he developed interest in nursing – thanks to the good care by his nurses, who he grew fondness for.

"I developed an interest in nursing because the medical staffers who nursed me were such nice people. Even then, I had no slightest idea I would personally end up as a nurse," says Jeremiah, now 31 years old and the nurse-in-charge at Njerian Dispensary, in Bomet County.

Upon being discharged from the hospital, he could not go back to herding cattle and instead hovered around the hospital premises doing menial jobs having become familiar with the area and staff at Tenwek Mission Hospital. One day a passerby, who had been observing him for some time, inquired from him why he was doing menial work instead of going to school.

"I explained that my mother was a single parent, who could not afford to pay tuition fee for me at school and that I had to fend for myself," says Jeremiah. The stranger offered to admit him in his privately-owned school and Jeremiah immediately obliged.

In 2001 Jeremiah's journey to become a nurse began in earnest, when he joined Chebole Mission School. His fees and upkeep were all paid by the

passerby who happened to be the headmaster of the school. A couple of months later, teachers realized Jeremiah was too bright for Class 4 and he was promoted to Class 5, which also proved fairly easy for the young lad. Jeremiah finally settled for Class 7, after which he emerged top of his class in the Class 8 national examinations.

When he eventually got an admission letter to Tenwek High School, he received the news with a mixture of joy and worry – joy because of the opportunity to further his studies and worry because he had no idea from which source to raise tuition fee. He nonetheless reported to his new school.

As fate would have it, the headmaster of the school happened to be one of the people in Tenwek, in whose compound Jeremiah used to do menial jobs, including trimming hedges, before joining primary school.

"He was shocked to see me because he couldn't believe I was the same boy who used to do occasional odd jobs in his compound. He admitted me without asking for a single penny and even

I have been mentoring and supporting three girls and two boys through their education. I am like their parent because I attend all school meetings on behalf of their parents and apply for their bursaries too.

mobilised teachers to buy me the things I needed to start the school with," says Jeremiah.

And although Tenwek High School is purely a boarding institution, Jeremiah was the only day scholar at the time having been allowed to operate from outside. This was to enable him venture in part time businesses to supplement the bursary the school was giving him. Upon completing high school, he continued with his business ventures for at least two years before applying for a nursing course.

But even after securing admission, the same old problem of lack of tuition fees returned to haunt Jeremiah. When he was not on a computer searching for scholarships, he was out selling eggs to make ends meet. He somehow managed to raise funds from well-wishers to pay college fee.

He however never gave up on searching the internet for funding: "One day I decided to make an appeal to United States Aid for International Development (USAID) and attached my college fees structure in a letter to the agency".

After a few weeks, lady luck smiled on him as he received a call from the Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) asking him to report to their office in Nairobi. KCDF promptly expressed willingness to support him.

"I was enrolled through the scholarships 'Window of Opportunity (WOO)' education pro-

gramme in 2012 and my fees and upkeep taken care of during my time at nursing school," says Jeremiah his face beaming with joy.

WOO is gender-based initiative targeting disadvantaged male students with university scholarships for candidates who have performed exceptionally well in their secondary school examination.

But he had not seen it all: "When my college fee was paid, I was on top of the world not knowing the best was yet to come. Mentorship and the life skills training was the best thing that ever happened to me. If they had paid my school fees only, I would not have been taken through the life skills and I would not have gained confidence," says Jeremiah. He visited many popular and high places in the course of his studies, where he met important people in the society, and this gave me the confidence to interact and relate with society's high and mighty.

He remembers his mentor, Maurice Odhiambo, as one person who has shaped his life. "He encouraged me, invited me to his house and counselled me on the need to be disciplined if ever I wanted to make it in life. He gave me hope and that is why we are still in contact to this day," he says.

As a gesture of appreciation, Jeremiah has, for some years now, been engaged in activities aimed at giving back to society: "I have been mentoring and supporting three girls and two boys through their education. I am like their parent because I attend all school meetings on behalf of their parents and apply for their bursaries too."

Currently a Board member in two schools, Jeremiah advises people who might find themselves in similar circumstances, to appreciate the fact that everything – including financial and social agony – has an end. "With determination, one can make it, but only by avoiding drugs and alcoholism."

The Aga Khan Health Service

Narok Medical Centre



**Peter
Ochieng**

Patient Service Officer
Narok

A Long Challenging Journey to University

Twenty-six-year-old **Peter Ochieng's** challenges of accessing education were evident even before he joined secondary school. Born in a family of nine, none of his siblings had ever completed secondary school studies, the furthest they had ever stretched being in Form Two.

Ochieng's parents are peasant farmers, who live on less than a (US) dollar a day and eke a living from their piece of land that could barely produce enough food even to feed themselves and their children.

"My primary and secondary education was a constant struggle. I was a very worried child growing up because I knew I would end up like my older siblings, who dropped out of school in Form Two, but I nonetheless remained focused and steadfast," says Ochieng, who now holds Bachelor's degree in Commerce.

Ochieng's academic journey was nonetheless problematic. His education may well have come to a halt at primary school level, had help not come through courtesy of Usigu Children Trust Fund, a sponsorship programme under Action Aid Kenya. Having secured admission at Usenge High School after successful completion of primary school, Ochieng was literally stuck following his parents' inability to pay his tuition fees.

Luckily his school fee was paid up enabling him to complete high school in 2010 with an excel-

lent score of grade "A". The impressive result secured Ochieng admission at Kenyatta University, where his tuition fee troubles continued.

"I do not know how else I would have managed to go through university, especially after being initially forced to defer studies," reacts Ochieng noting that his close contacts with the staff at Usigu Children Trust Fund came in handy since they were aware he was a needy student. They introduced him to Kenya Community Development Foundation's (KCDF) Global Give Back Circle (GGBC).

The intervention of GGBC through the "Window of Opportunity" saved the day for Ochieng by sponsoring his entire undergraduate course: "The sponsorship was life-changing as I was finally guaranteed of completing my university education. Life here was more comfortable and certain than in the past."

Ochieng, however, still nurses regrets over one thing. He was linked to a mentor, whom he struggled in vain to get in touch with. This fact disturbs him to date.

Despite losing out on mentorship, he was able to attend training sessions on life skills, financial discipline and etiquette, all organized by GGBC: “I experienced some things I had never heard of like buffet,” says Ochieng with a chuckle. He observes he left college “a totally different person” because through the life skills he was able to learn how to interact with people, how to hunt for a job, conduct himself during interviews, widen and use networks: “And that is precisely how I landed a job – through networks I had built,” he says.

The sessions also enabled Ochieng to interact with people who had gone through similar tough and rough experiences. This enabled him to relate well with their stories and experiences.

One of the key lessons he learnt was giving back to society, something he observes is very fulfilling: “I spent time during holidays and after cam-

pus, to mentor students at a local orphanage. I coached them and helped to raise their self-esteem and confidence,” says Ochieng, who still feels the urge to offer more to society by starting a mentorship programme for primary schools children, where he can chart their career path by sharing his personal story.

“I want them to believe they can make it and break from the shackles of poverty just the way I did,” he says.

Ochieng advises those, who might be undergoing challenges like the ones he experienced, to never lose focus of their set goals in life but keep their heads held up high: “Believing in yourself is an important virtue because it makes others believe in you as well,” says Ochieng, who now works as a Patient Service Officer/Cashier at the Aga Khan Hospital in Narok County. He still nurses hopes to get a job in his area of specialisation–Finance.

A portrait of Augustine Kipetowas, a man with short dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue turtleneck and a tan jacket. He is looking slightly to the right. The background is a teal wall with a blue sign that says "DIS".

Augustine Kipetowas

*Occupational Safety and Health Officer
Nakuru*

TRICT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
AND SAFETY OFFICER

How **Cattle Rustlers** Almost Ruined a Boy's Chance to Pursue **Higher** **Education**

In the small town of Kainuk, on the border of Turkana and West Pokot, men are regarded as brave for cattle raiding and warfare and not for excelling in education. And this yardstick of bravery is replicated virtually across the two northern Kenya counties.

While attitudes on education have gradually changed over the years, Augustine Kipetowas who was born and raised in Kainuk was similarly exposed to this kind of mind-set. However, when he reached the school-going age, one of his uncles who had been exposed to education took him to his home and enrolled him at Kainuk Primary School. Life at the school was terrifying since they had to brave frequent attacks by rustlers as they fetched water and fire wood.

He narrates: "One day we went to fetch firewood and decided to split into two groups. The other group was attacked by rustlers after straying into a field where the rustlers were grazing animals. Unfortunately, one of my classmates and friend was shot dead. The situation was generally bad as there were days we had to miss school because of insecurity."

Despite these impediments and misfortunes, Augustine's spirit was not dampened as he continued to work hard and lead in his class: "I knew that the only way to get a better life was to work hard in school and that is exactly what I chose to focus on."

The cattle raids, narrates Augustine, intensified and when he was just about to sit for national examinations in Class 8, one such raid took place in their home and all his father's cattle was stolen. The timing of the theft was terrible and devastating to the young learner, considering that his father had planned to sell the animals to raise his secondary school fees.

Somehow he managed to collect himself and faced the examinations with a positive attitude. When results came through, Augustine had excelled and secured admission at the prestigious Maseno School. However, the poor lad had no idea where he would get money to pursue his dreams.

With all the cattle gone, his chances of joining the national school in Kisumu County was diminished and his parents accordingly suggested that

When I joined UoN things started falling in place, because in my second year of study I was made aware of Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF). I applied for a scholarship and was enrolled in the education programme. Being a beneficiary under the scholarship programme, they not only took care of my fees, but trained me on various life skills such as leadership empowerment, financial literacy, computer literacy among many others.

he enrolls at Lodwar Secondary School, a move he vehemently rejected.

"Following their suggestion, I embarked on the exercise of looking for scholarships and was lucky to be invited for one interview, which I performed pretty well and was given a chance. However a last minute hitch emerged that I was not an orphan and the chance was taken away from me. The other slot was given to a girl," recalls Augustine, who is now 27 years old.

Nonetheless, he never gave up and continued applying for scholarships. With the deadline for reporting to school drawing closer, one of his relatives suggested he reports at Maseno School first as he searched for money. After reporting at the lakeside institution, a depressed Augustine asked his relative to take him to the Ministry of Education. While there he was asked to fill the Jomo Kenyatta Foundation application forms leading to the awarding of a four year scholarship. Augustine proceeded well at Maseno School excelling in national examinations and getting admitted at the University of Nairobi (UoN) in 2011 to study Bio-Chemistry.

Utilizing the money he had been saving from part time teaching after completing secondary education and with a bursary top up, he was able to pay for his first year university education.

“When I joined UoN things started falling in place, because in my second year of study I was made aware of Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF). I applied for a scholarship and was enrolled in the education programme. Being a beneficiary under the scholarship programme, they not only took care of my fees, but trained me on various life skills such as leadership empowerment, financial literacy, computer literacy among many others” says Augustine, who is the Senior Occupational Safety and Health Officer, based in Nakuru.

Through the programme, he was part of the audience invited to attend to a speech delivery by the 44th US President Barack Obama at Kasarani Stadium’s indoor arena in Nairobi, during the former American leader’s tour of Kenya in July, 2015: “I have enjoyed wide exposure and now view the world in real life not theoretically,” says Augustine, who was Chair of Turkana University Students Association during his hey days at the university.

Admittedly, KCDF taught Augustine how to give back to society and so, when he was not offering community service at Lodwar District Hospital – before devolved system of government came in place in 2013 – he was volunteering his services at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, while on attachment.

Augustine is however saddened by the fact that despite efforts to try and get a mentor, he graduated without getting one.

Upon graduation, he relocated to his home in Lodwar, Turkana County, where he continued with community service at the Lodwar Referral Hospital: “While here, I was shocked at the state of affairs because simple laboratory tests could not be undertaken at the hospital and so, I introduced biochemical tests, recommended purchase of machines and standard operating procedures for biochemistry tests. The hospital is now a level 5 hospital partly because of my contribution,” boosts Augustine.

According to Augustine, he went further to introduce Continuous Medical Education (CME), a routine meeting where laboratory staff met and discussed the most efficient laboratory methods to use for various tests. He chaired the sessions. In 2017, he saw an advertisement seeking Occupational Safety and Health Officers and opted to try his luck. He was invited for the interview and eventually employed and posted to Nakuru where he is currently stationed.

“The skills gained from KCDF have ably guided me on how to relate with clients. At the same time, life skills training has enabled me to develop good working relations with my clients,” observes Augustine advising the youth not to be ashamed and never to give up on knocking doors for opportunities.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

You can participate in this noble initiative in the following ways;

⚙️ SPONSOR

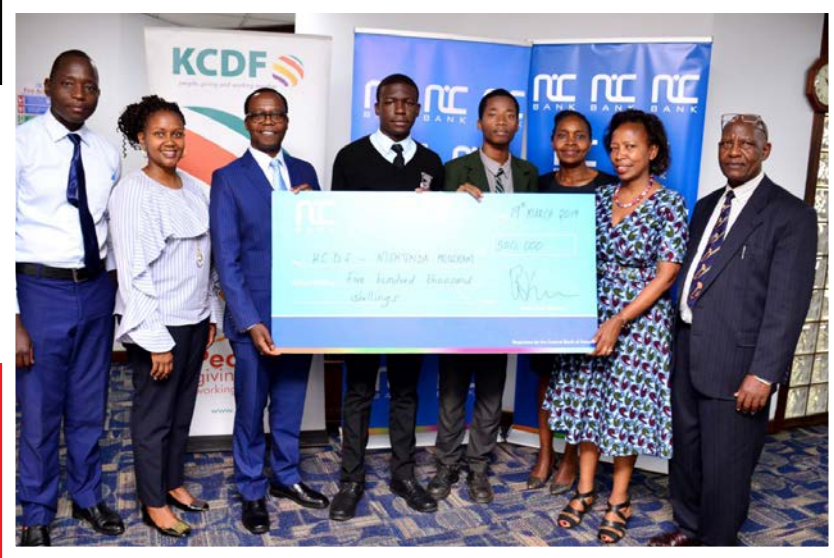
- Adopt one school of your choice at a cost of Kes.500,000 per annum (school within a radius of 100 kms from Nairobi County). The school must demonstrate interest and commitment to the initiative.
- Support a fundraising event to raise the profile and resource for the initiative.
- Provide opportunities for KCDF to recruit champions or mentors in your esteemed company.

⚙️ CHAMPION/MENTORS

- Provide opportunities for KCDF to recruit men of integrity as champions or mentors in your networks.
- Provide KCDF with linkages to potential companies for funding opportunities.
- Connect KCDF to potential schools that have shown interest and commitment for the initiative.
- Support the initiative by making a personal donation of Kes 1,250 monthly/quarterly/annually.

⚙️ PARTICIPATING MENTENDA SCHOOLS

Schools willing to be part of the initiative must demonstrate interest and commitment for the initiative. Initially, the initiative targets schools within a radius of 100 kms from Nairobi.



LONGSTANDING MENTENDA CORPORATE PARTNERS

KCDF has continued rolling out the **MENTENDA Initiative** in different secondary schools largely in Nairobi County with **Isuzu East Africa** supporting and mentoring Muhuri Muchiri Secondary School and **NCBA Bank** supporting Upper Hill Secondary School.



The Executive Director

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