



c**mmunity**

A KCDF publication highlighting the girl child education programme success stories

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KCDF is a Kenyan public foundation that supports community development initiatives across Kenya, through grant-making, enhancing capacity development, endowment building as well as local resource mobilization. Our areas of support cut across diverse development issues that affect vulnerable and marginalized communities, such as food security, education, youth and children, girl-child, livelihoods and environment, community asset building, policy, research and advocacy. All in an effort to enable needy and marginalized communities to access their rights and realize livelihood opportunities.



The Global Give Back Circle has blossomed into the largest gender-based tertiary education and mentoring program for at-risk girls in Kenya through a give-back process propelled by KCDF, USAID Kenya, a compassionate private sector, a devoted local community, mentors and the girls themselves. The 'circle' is designed for sustainability as beneficiaries learn how to become benefactors through the registration of annual give back commitments that guide them on how to drive positive change and create measurable impact in their communities. Years of commitment-making has embedded a powerful give back ethos among the girls, now young women, in the 'circle.' They are making a significant impact in their communities and throughout Kenya.

Dear Friend of KCDF,

Mitchell Obama once said, ***“every girl, no matter where she lives, deserves the opportunity to develop the promise inside of her.”***

For over 11 years now, KCDF in collaboration with other valuable partners have continued to put effort towards increasing the number of girls transiting successfully to higher levels of education through provision of education scholarships and life skills acquisition under the girl child programme. This is crucial as several girls face challenges that deny them access to quality education some of which include poverty, backward cultural practices, domestic labour, lack of mentorship, inadequate infrastructure, living in conflict and crisis related areas amongst other challenges. The focus on education scholarships and life skills acquisition is specifically to needy and bright girls.

One of KCDF's partner is the Global Give Back Circle (GGBC) education programme which ensures that girls from poor and vulnerable backgrounds are empowered and supported to transition to higher levels of education through the provision of education and mentorship scholarships. The programme is supported by the American people through USAID Kenya, grassroots organizations, a generous private corporate sector and individual donors.

In this newsletter, you will read captivating stories of successful girls who have conquered challenges that would have denied them the opportunity of getting education and the acquisition of life skills. From a vulnerable orphan to a thriving engineer, to a girl who has studied mechanical engineering to inspire others in the slums, to one who broke cultural barriers to attain an education, one who was a timid girl but emerged to be crowned Miss. University, to one

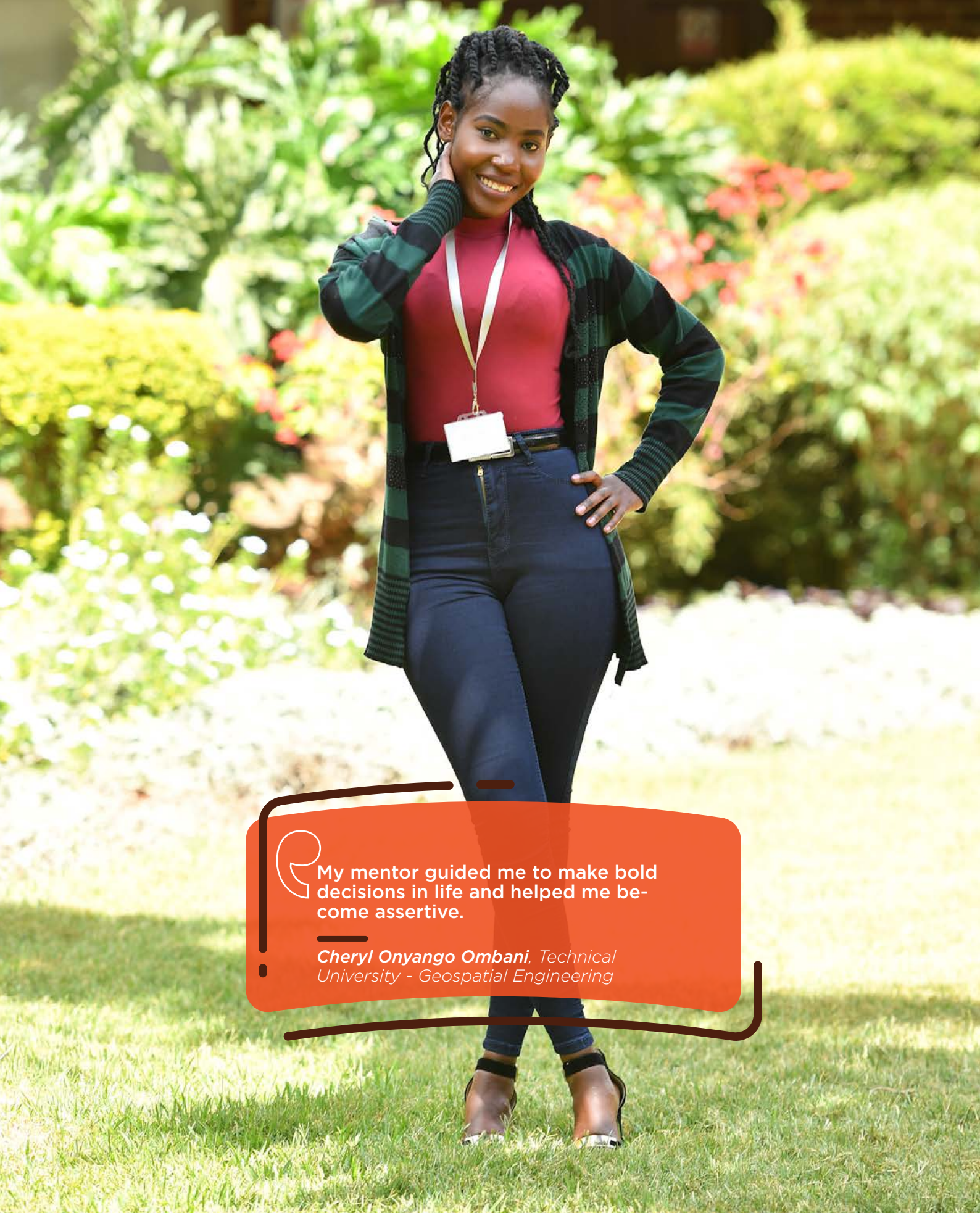
whose mentor has shaped her and is in turn mentoring others, to one who owes her success to her fathers' devotion and to one more who has experienced the power of mentors.

The girl child education program does not only provide tertiary education but also an opportunity for the beneficiaries to connect with matched and dedicated mentors both locally and globally as well as undergo trainings on life skills which include, leadership skills, financial literacy, reproductive health and work-force readiness skills, all with the objective of making them holistic individuals in society. In addition, the girls benefit from partnerships built with private sector companies offering work attachment opportunities, professional mentorship and financial support.

One of the guiding principles of Global Give Back Circle is for beneficiaries to give back to society, even as they transition to be independent young women. These beneficiaries have been able to give back to their communities on projects that are close to their hearts giving them a chance to transform from being beneficiaries to benefactors.

We are committed to changing the trajectory of many girls' lives for the better and it is our hope that you will be inspired by these stories of triumph. We are grateful to all those who offered to be part of this girls' educational journeys. KCDF's education, mentorship and scholarship programme would not have accomplished nearly as much without your support. We still have many girls we need to care for, for them to attain their dream and full potential through education and life skills. For more information on how you can support this programme and how we are working with communities to make a difference, kindly visit our website on www.kcdf.or.ke

Editorial Team



My mentor guided me to make bold decisions in life and helped me become assertive.

Cheryl Onyango Ombani, Technical University - Geospatial Engineering

From Vulnerable Orphan to Thriving Engineer

I came up with Mshauri Trust Foundation, to take care of street children. I love to encourage these children, so that they can endure the tough circumstances.

Cheryl Onyango Ombani comes from Migori County. In a country where poverty is widespread, becoming an orphan at the age of two years seems like a death sentence. This was precisely where Cheryl found herself; the youngest of four children has no memory of her parents. After losing both of her parents, she had to be separated from her siblings.

Although Cheryl was grateful to be taken in by her uncle, this joy was quickly robbed. The uncle also passed away a few years later. This did not stop her from dreaming of a better life for herself and that of her siblings. She worked very hard in school and excelled in her national exams. Cheryl earned a place in Starehe Girls' Centre, where she received a full high school scholarship support. There she grew into an inspiring adult, dedicated to changing the lives of future generations. Due to her hardworking and undying spirit, she attained a B+ (plus) in her K.C.S.E examinations.

She had no idea that her dream of joining the University would be met with a lot of setbacks. Her step-uncle, a new face in the family, treated her like a servant. Cheryl decided to run away from home. It was then that she remembered having been introduced to a girl child programme while at Starehe Girls'.

KCDF's tertiary program, the Global Give Back Circle, saved the day for Cheryl. She was offered a life-changing scholarship to study engineering. She was also linked to a mentor, who supported her immensely

through her journey. She says, "my mentor guided me to make bold decisions in life and helped me become assertive."

Through the workshops offered by GGBC programme, Cheryl learnt a lot about financial skills, reproductive health and general life skills. Her journey also inspired her to give back to the society. "I came up with Mshauri Trust Foundation, to take care of street children. I love to encourage these children, so that they can endure the tough circumstances."

Thankfully, Cheryl now has a bright future and is an inspiring role model for others. She hopes to start an engineering company of her own in the future.



Had it not been for the support of GGBC programme, I can confidently say that I would not have completed my university education. My journey has taught me not to give up. GGBC has taught me that, if someone touches your life, pay it forward. Give back to the society.

*Beryl Akinyi Sewe, Mechanical Engineer,
States Department of Infrastructure.*

Studying Mechanical Engineering to Inspire Women in the Slums

The fact that you come from the slum area does not mean that you are destined to be there for life. One can always change their circumstance.

I believe that young girls should be given the opportunity to succeed in those careers that have been predominantly dominated by men.

Growing up in Trans Nzoia County, Beryl Akinyi Sewe's life took a turn when her father who was a policeman, fell sick and had to retire early. They had to move out of the police quarters and into the slum. Beryl's parents struggled to keep the family fed, clothed and pay for her school fees. In that Struggle, Beryl was not deterred. She did well in her KCSE examinations, allowing her to join an engineering program.

Beryl's dream of completing her degree in engineering seemed bleak. She accrued significant fee balances, and as a result, she was no longer allowed to attend her classes. While she was away, Beryl could not have access to class notes since she had not made any friends in school. "Being poor robs you off your confidence. You cannot stand or speak to people. You cannot easily make friends," she shares.

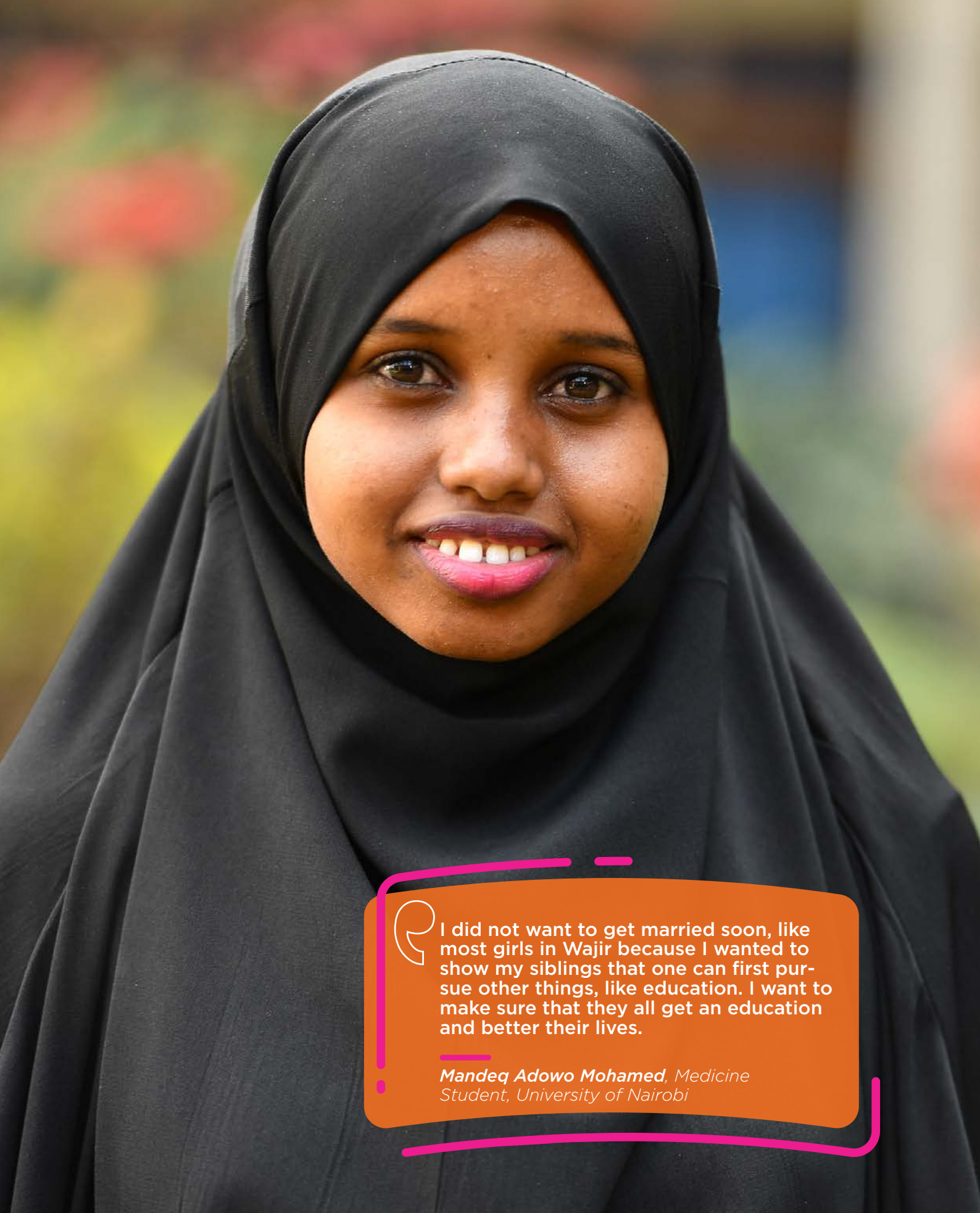
Beryl did not give up hope; she instead kept reaching out to different organizations for help. One of them was USAID, that shared her story with KCDF. After a successful application, she joined Global Give Back Circle, KCDF's girl child programme. GGBC did not

only offset her fee balance, but also provided her with accommodation and upkeep allowance. Beryl's parents were overjoyed when she successfully completed her mechanical engineering course in 2016.

After graduation, Beryl secured an internship with Kenya Pipeline Company. She has continued to be successful and now works at the State Department of Infrastructure under Mechanical and Transport Division, as the Chief Engineer. She is thankful to GGBC for empowering and enabling her to pursue mechanical engineering, which has been a lifelong passion and calling. "Had it not been for the support of GGBC programme, I can confidently say that I would not have completed my university education. My journey has taught me not to give up. GGBC has taught me that, if someone touches your life, pay it forward. Give back to the society," Beryl shares.

Beryl takes on every opportunity she gets to encourage other girls to pursue engineering courses. She adds, "I believe that young girls should be given the opportunity to succeed in those careers that have been predominantly dominated by men."

Thanks to the life-skills workshop that she attended in the program, she has gained confidence and a voice to shun vices in the slums and help other girls hone their desired abilities. "The fact that you come from the slum area does not mean that you are destined to be there for life. One can always change their circumstance." She speaks.



I did not want to get married soon, like most girls in Wajir because I wanted to show my siblings that one can first pursue other things, like education. I want to make sure that they all get an education and better their lives.

Mandeq Adowo Mohamed, *Medicine Student, University of Nairobi*

Breaking Cultural Barriers to Education

This group is a powerful forum in that the lives of young girls are positively transformed by encouraging them to change their perception on education and life in general.

Mandeq Adowo was brought up Wajir, North region of Kenya, a place she remembers as dry and dusty. When she was in standard three, her parents transferred her from a public school to another school where they believed that she could get quality education.

“My mother was and still is very forward thinking,” she says. “She is not learned having lacked an opportunity to go to school but is a great champion of education partly why I was moved schools because she wanted a strong education foundation for me. Whenever we are together, she does not miss a chance to encourage me and my brother to be the best versions of ourselves. She is my biggest cheerleader.”

Mandeq excelled in her studies through her primary school, and she received a calling letter to join Alliance Girls’ High School, a public national school in Kenya. But there were some reservations especially from her parents. The school having been founded by Christian missionaries holds Christian values in high esteem and they were concerned that she would lose her faith. Reluctantly, they let her join Alliance Girls’ High School.

“It was really difficult for the first two years because I came from a very different environment where we were all largely of the same faith,” She says. “The culture shock impacted my studies, and I was not doing well in class. But my mother kept encouraging me. Eventually things got better after adjusting. I scored an A (plain) in my final exams. Alliance, apart from giving me the best education and socialization, made me see that my faith was a matter of the heart. It also made me respect Christianity,” she says.

Looking back, she is grateful that she had been able to get a good education despite her background. “I was sponsored by UNICEF for my secondary education who later introduced me to Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) who are implementing the girl child programme Global Give Back Circle (GGBC). I applied for a scholarship opportunity to pursue my dream career, Medicine. The programme has not only catered for all my school fees right up to now that I am in my sixth year, but also attached me to a mentor and offered some key life skills training making me a holistic student.”

Coming from a community that attaches little value to the girl child, going to school and pursuing a degree in medicine is a big deal. She is an inspiration to other girls in her community and to her siblings. “I did not want to get married soon, like most girls in Wajir because I want to show my siblings that one can first pursue other things, like education. I want to make sure that they all get an education and better their lives,” Mandeq quips.

Having seen the value and the limitlessness of education, Mandeq hopes to change the tune of her society and empower as many girls as she can. She belongs to a group called Wajir Enforcement Educational Group that give talks and mentors young girls on education and life issues.

“This group is a powerful forum in that the lives of young girls are positively transformed by encouraging them to change their perception on education and life in general,” she offers.



My experience with GGBC is a miracle because not everyone qualifies for this opportunity. When I joined the programme I was a timid girl, I could not talk confidently, was very shy and I could not maintain eye contact. Thanks to the mentorship and training I received, I am now very confident. My hope is that more girls can join this programme because it is life changing.

Sharon Murugi Thuo, Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology (KWUST)

From a Timid Girl to Miss Kiriri Women's University

In a few months, I will be finishing my degree in Business Administration. I am born again and the reigning Miss Kiriri. I was chosen based on some qualities I exude. I am kind, welcoming, humble, intelligent and good hearted.

Sharon confesses that when she thinks about it, it is still surreal that she holds this title.

"I come from Kiambu County. My family lives at Dumberi and I schooled in the same area. While at St. Ann's Gishosho Girls High School, a school in the locality, I was enrolled to the Global Give Back Circle (GGBC) programme. I qualified because of my academic credentials and my background. I come from a very humble background. Both my parents were unemployed when I was joining secondary school and we were basically surviving from hand to mouth. The support I received from GGBC could not have come at a better time in my life and it was such a relief to my parents," she offers.

Sharon attends an all-girls university and partly one of the reasons she chose it, is because she was awarded a partial scholarship. "There are those who are bothered that it has only one gender, but it is honestly not a big deal to me. The only time I am made aware of this fact is when other people mention the oddity of it," she says.

As a recipient of GGBC sponsorship, she acknowledges that it has changed her life in many ways. "It is mind blowing when I think about everything that I have learnt. The life skills training workshops have been an immense source of direction and perspective. I have learnt how to build an unforgettable brand. I

have learnt the importance of having a vision board. On what is listed on my vision board is to finish my undergraduate, then follow it up with a master's degree next year. However, my priority now is to complete my degree and transition to employment so that I start supporting my parents and siblings. They have played a major role in shaping me into a woman of value, my mother especially. She does not tire to pray and believe with me".

"Besides my parents, I have a mentor. She is Madam Louise Njeri and works with Isuzu East Africa. I have learnt, from her own personal story, that nothing comes easy. You have to be willing to work hard for it", Sharon says. "My giveback commitment is called "Changamsha Siste". Changamsha loosely translated to revive. Siste sister. I am giving back to the girl child just as I have received. I found the information I learnt at GGBC quite useful, so I decided to share with these girls. I go back to my secondary school and speak to the girls and occasionally bring together girls in my community and mentor them".

"My experience with GGBC is a miracle because not everyone qualifies for this opportunity. When I joined the programme I was a timid girl, I could not talk confidently, was very shy and I could not maintain eye contact. Thanks to the mentorship and training I received, I am now very confident. My hope is that more girls can join this programme because it is life changing".



For me that's how life should work - when someone holds your hand, you have to hold another person's hand and that way, we create a big strong ring.

*Maureen Chepkirui, Landscape Architecture,
JKUAT*

My Mentor Shaped My Life, So I am Mentoring Others

It gives me great joy to see how we help build and grow their confidence and dignity. For me that's how life should work - when someone holds your hand, you have to hold another person's hand and that way, we create a big strong ring.

Maureen grew up in Bomet. Her father passed on when she was in class two and the little earning her mother made from growing and selling vegetables and milk, could hardly get them by. "The first transition was transferring from a private to a public school. Life was hard. We didn't have food, or wear shoes to school," She says. The sisters in the Catholic school she moved to soon noticed her academic excellence and sponsored her. Then life got better. She focused more on education and passed well enough to join Starehe Girls. "Life was much better in high school," she says. "Starehe was kind to me. I learnt to stay in course, to be patient and to work hard." She got an A- (minus) in her Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). She later joined JKUAT to study Landscape Architecture, graduated and now works as a site supervisor with a local firm.

"Was I intelligent enough and worked hard in my school days?" She self-questioned. "Yes. I did. But all I have become is because of KCDF, who came to our school when I was in form two and picked a few of us to attend workshops which taught us various life skills. I think my life started shaping from this point. I started looking at life with a different mirror. These workshops gave me the courage to face life. The other thing that changed my life is my mentor, whom I got under the KCDF/GGBC program. Her name is Vanessa Gruttadaurio and she is based in New York. She is amazing. She is like a sister, a mother and a friend all rolled into one," She shares.

Maureen talks about her mentor and it is easy to see why. They speak all the time. She has shaped her life, her thinking and her career. "Before I make any important decision, I have to seek her perspective because she always makes me see things differently. I'm so blessed to have her," she says. However, Vanessa does not offer straight solutions. She lets her make the final decision by asking questions like, "what do you feel about that? Why do you think that happened? What does your instinct tell you to do at this point? What is your greatest fear at this point?" "It's only after they have talked about it, and what she thinks she should do, that she will weigh in her opinion. I think she is amazing." She speaks.

She knows that she is lucky to have her mentor in her corner. "I feel like there is nothing I can't tackle in life with Vanessa being just a phone-call or email away," she offers. And because of this fruitful relationship, Maureen felt the need to mentor and inspire other girls who do not have access to mentorship like she does.

Currently, she mentors with a group called The Malikia Mentorship Program. They mentor girls at AIC Kajiado. "These are Maasai girls who have been rescued from early marriages and FGM. Most of these girls have low self-esteem and it is our job to talk to them and raise their confidence again. It gives me great joy to see how we help build and grow their confidence and dignity. For me that's how life should work - when someone holds your hand, you have to hold another person's hand and that way, we create a big strong ring."



For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be an engineer. As a young girl, I had great interest in math and sciences, two integral subjects for engineering courses enthusiasts. My father played a big role in influencing me to pursue the course. He always encouraged me to tackle the hard subjects.

Grace Mulekye Mng'eli, Graduate, Technical University of Kenya (TUK): Mechanical Engineering

I Owe My Success to My Father's Devotion

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to be an engineer. As a young girl, I had great interest in math and sciences, two integral subjects for engineering courses enthusiasts. My father played a big role in influencing me to pursue the course. He always encouraged me to tackle the hard subjects.

Grace comes from a humble family in a village in Mwingi, Kitui County and describes her childhood as a chord of many sad notes. "I had very low self-esteem in primary school because of our financial incapability and because our school was far from home, the walks were too tiring to focus on class. However, with the encouragement from my father, I worked hard and came top of my school in the Kenya Certificate for Primary Education (KCPE) exams. It was a joyous moment for my entire family and this success catapulted my confidence. It was an affirmation that I could do it".

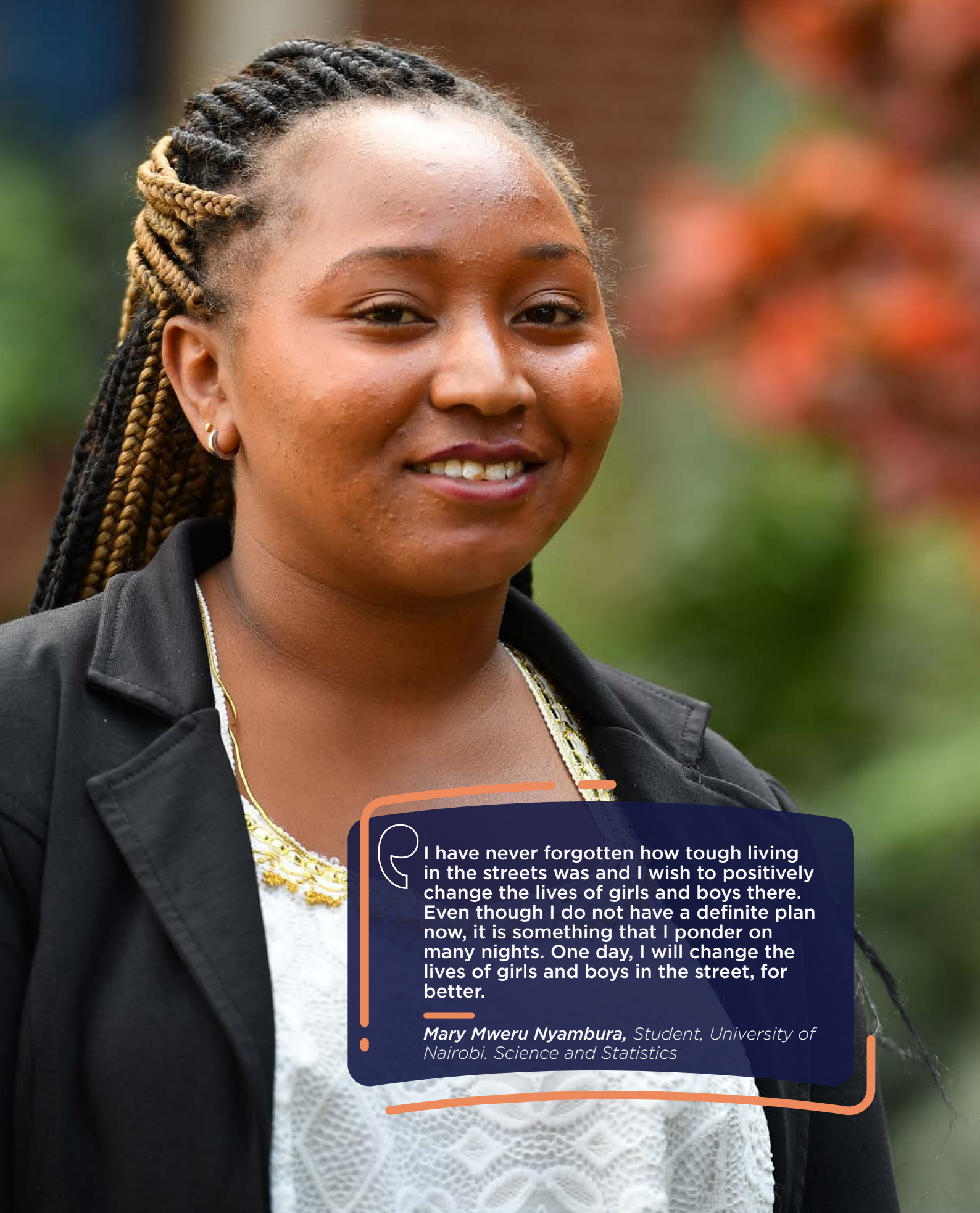
"For my secondary school studies, I joined St. Angela's girls in Kitui County. It was a big school of about 400 students and it being a new environment, my father was by my side urging me on," she offers. Since she was not very good at socializing, Grace dug deep in books. She posted an impressive A- (minus) grade in her final exams for the Kenya Certificate for Secondary Education (KCSE).

"I was elated. I was going to join university, a feat not achieved by many girls I knew. As I waited for my parents to pool money for my university studies, which included holding a fundraiser, I got a temporary job as a science teacher. I joined TUK then moved to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and it is while here that I got into the Glob-

al Give Back Circle, a programme dedicated to helping hundreds of girls continue their education, receive mentorship and life skills training, find employment and give back to their communities".

"GGBC opened my world to new possibilities. I particularly enjoyed their life-skills workshops that addressed topics such as reproductive health and financial skills. GGBC also ensured that I remained in school through paying my school fees and offering me an upkeep. That is more than anyone could have asked for," she offers.

As her give back plan, Grace has a mentee in secondary school. "Basically, she is a beneficiary through me and is following in my engineering steps. I must say that she is doing very well. My hope is that through this mentorship process, she will also pay it forward and mentor another girl, preferably one pursuing engineering because the world should never have enough of women engineers".



I have never forgotten how tough living in the streets was and I wish to positively change the lives of girls and boys there. Even though I do not have a definite plan now, it is something that I ponder on many nights. One day, I will change the lives of girls and boys in the street, for better.

Mary Mweru Nyambura, Student, University of Nairobi. Science and Statistics

From the Streets to the University

I have grown up and I am able to pursue my dreams like any other person thanks to the generosity of people of goodwill, some whom I probably will never meet. They have been like my parents. I do want to be someone's parent as well, someone who needs help like I did.

Mary Mweru Nyambura was brought up in Star of Hope Children's home in Juja. "I don't know where I was born because I don't even have my birth certificate, but I have a vague image of my childhood and it is sad. I remember our mother chasing me and my sisters around and her having bouts of epilepsy. Then she died and we found ourselves in the care of my grandmother who was cruel to us, me especially," she says.

Mary is the third born in a family of four and having been born from a different father than her grandmother did not like, she was singled out for that. "She made me work in quarries, fetch water and do tough household chores." A few years later, she passed on and that is how they found themselves in the street. "It is one of the toughest seasons in my life because the streets are not safe," she offers.

One day they heard about a catholic sister who served porridge in a centre in Ruiru Town and that children like her were welcome there. So, they went. She was roughly five years old at the time. After frequenting the centre a few times, the Sister took all of them in. They were then enrolled in a local primary school in Ruiru. "My uptake was fast. I enjoyed doing math and other sciences and most students would ask me for help and I would teach them," she shares.

When she sat for her Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exams, she did well and received a call-

ing letter to join Starehe Girls' centre. It is here that she joined the Global Give Back Circle, a programme dedicated to helping hundreds of girls continue their education, receive mentorship and life skills training, find employment and give back to their communities.

To Mary, the workshops were a window into a different worldview that she could not have gained academically. "I started growing my social skills that were quite undeveloped to this point," she says. "It was very enlightening to interact with the GGBC information and it not only moulded me as a young girl, but also made me realise the need to also be smart out of a class setting."

Mary is currently enrolled at the University of Nairobi pursuing Science and Statistics and eyes for a First Class Honours degree. "I have never forgotten how tough living in the streets was and I wish to positively change the lives of girls and boys there. Even though I do not have a definite plan now, it is something that I ponder on many nights. One day, I will change the lives of girls and boys in the street, for better," she offers. She is particularly grateful to the Sisters at Star of Hope Children's Home, USAID who support the program and KCDF who implement GGBC. "I have grown up and I am able to pursue my dreams like any other person thanks to the generosity of people of goodwill, some who I probably will never meet. They have been like my parents. I do want to be someone's parent as well, someone who needs help like I did."

PARTNERS

Scholarships

USAID	Andela	Shah Ranmal Raja Trust
ATE Bank	KPMG East Africa	Individual Donors
Angel Investors	Mastercard Foundation	Victoria Commercial Bank Charitable Trust
Deloitte	Isuzu East Africa	T. Rowe Price
Standard Chartered Bank	Rhino Cement Foundation	Apple
Equity Bank	Surgipharm Ltd	Morgan Stanley
Aqua Agencies	ZEP-RE Reinsurance	Cisco
Yahya Family Trust	Monsanto Fund	Google
	Microsoft	

Internships

Equity Bank	Monsanto	Johnson & Johnson
Ecolab	Surgipharm Ltd	ZEP-RE Reinsurance
KPMG East Africa	Diamond Trust Bank	USAID
Total	Standard Chartered Bank	
Deloitte	YALI	

Mentorship

Amiran Kenya	Standard Chartered Bank	Safaricom
KPMG East Africa	Ernst & Young	Safari Park Hotel
Barclays	Citibank	Sarova Hotel
Equity Bank	Intel	Isuzu East Africa
USAID	Deloitte	Cisco
Microsoft	PwC	Google
Gates Foundation	Proctor & Gamble	Apple
ZEP-RE Reinsurance	USAID	Total
Mastercard Foundation	USDA	Andela
YALI	T. Rowe Price	Sygenta
Twitter	ICEA Lion	Safaricom Foundation

Others

Liquid Telecom - Internet at Starehe Girls'Centre	Oracle Edge Consulting - Life-Skills Training
Eaton Electrical Ltd - Give Back Awards	Safaricom Foundation - ICT Lab
Citibank - Mentor Events & Life-Skills Workshop	Safaricom - Mentor Events
PwC - Mentor Events	Sarova Hotels - Accommodation
ZEP-RE Reinsurance - Mentor Events	KPMG East Africa - Mentor Events & ICT Lab
PwC - Mentor Events	Andela - Life-Skills Workshops
Ford Foundation - Leadership Conference	USAID - Life-Skills Workshops
Microsoft - ICT Lab	



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