

Stories of Change from the KCDF Education Scholarship Programme

Levelling the Education Playing Field for Deserving Children in Kenya

Progress Update

Ksh 75M
Raised

138
Students Supported

106
New Enrolments

32
Continuing Students

About KCDF

Kenya Community Development Foundation

Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) is a public charitable foundation founded in 1997 that supports sustainable community-driven development in Kenya. We believe that complete and lasting change is possible when communities initiate and drive their development agenda.

KCDF invests resources to build, strengthen and sustain the core capacities of our communities through long-term collaborations with governments, non-profit organisations, the private sector and individuals.

Our Vision

Flourishing and resilient communities.

Our Mission

To Promote Social Justice and the Sustainable Development of Communities.

Our Guiding Philosophy

Shifting Power to Communities

Sustainable change is possible when communities are at the centre of their own development, harnessing financial and non-financial resources in their midst.

Flourishing Communities

Communities attain an improved quality of life through recognising and investing their resources — thriving where social justice prevails.

Resilient Communities

Communities can mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses. KCDF works in partnership to complement community-led efforts.

Working Together

Sustainable development requires diverse actors — civil society, governments, the private sector and individuals — collaborating toward common goals.



McDonald Shiundu, KCDF's Education Programme Officer, responding to students' questions during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

About the Education Programme

A holistic approach to unlocking opportunity for Kenya's youth

Our education programs aim to enhance enrolment, facilitate progression, and support smooth transitions across various levels of learning, with the community at the heart of improving educational outcomes.

Key Strategic Objectives

- Increase access to inclusive quality education.
- Enhance lifelong skills development at secondary and tertiary levels.
- Build community capacity to promote quality education in local schools.

Our Holistic Scholarship Model

KCDF recognises that access alone does not guarantee completion. Many students from underserved backgrounds drop out due to hidden costs, psychosocial pressure, or lack of professional exposure.

To address this, KCDF provides comprehensive support that includes:

Tuition Fees	Accommodation & Meals
Full coverage of institutional tuition costs.	Housing and upkeep to reduce financial stress.
Structured ICT Training	Mentorship
Digital literacy to strengthen career readiness.	Through the Mentor Connect platform.
Internship Placements	Start-Up Toolkits
Through partner institutions and employers.	For TVET graduates entering self-employment.
Life Skills Training	

Covering communication, financial literacy, employability skills, reproductive health, and other relevant competencies to support students as they transition into adulthood and the workforce



Students listening in to one of the sessions during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

Program Milestones

Youth Employment and Skills Programme (YESP)

Through the Youth Employment and Skills Programme (YESP), we hosted a two-day Life Skills Workshop on 18th and 19th April 2026, bringing together 138 students enrolled in the KCDF scholarship programme. The workshop formed part of KCDF's ongoing efforts to support vulnerable and deserving youth with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in school, work, and life.

The workshop provided an opportunity to onboard new students into the programme and introduce them to the MentorKonnnect mentorship initiative. Participants also attended sessions on

financial literacy, personal branding and communication, and reproductive health, all facilitated by YESP alumni who shared practical insights drawn from their own experiences.

The workshop reinforced our commitment to empowering young people through education, mentorship, and skills development, helping them build a strong foundation for their academic and professional journeys.

Strategic Partnerships

In April this year, our partners, The Asian Foundation, participated in the YESP Life Skills Workshop where they facilitated a speed mentoring session for our YESP learners. The session covered career planning, employability skills, leadership and confidence, and entrepreneurship, providing participants with practical insights to support their academic, personal, and professional development.

We also partner with the Institute of Advanced Technology (IAT) to equip the students with practical ICT skills that enhance their digital literacy and employability. The training provides the learners with hands-on exposure to technology and digital tools, helping them build competencies that are essential for entrepreneurship and participation in the modern workforce.



Smita Sanghrajka, MentorKonnnect Founder, addressing students during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

The 2025 Education Campaign

"Let's Level the Education Playing Field"

In 2025, KCDF launched the "Let's Level the Education Playing Field" campaign to address the widening gap between secondary school completion and access to higher education for vulnerable yet high-potential youth.

Despite strong academic performance, many students from underserved communities are unable to transition to university or TVET institutions due to financial constraints. The campaign sought to raise **Ksh 80 million** — ensuring talented young people were not locked out of opportunity simply because of their economic circumstances.

Through the generosity of partners and donors, the campaign raised **Ksh 75 million**. As a result, **138 students** were supported, including **106 new enrolments** and **32 continuing students**, across various universities and TVET institutions in Kenya.

Ksh 75M

Amount
Raised

138

Students
Supported

106

New
Enrolments

32

Continuing
Students

Student Placement Outcomes

Category	Total	New Enrolment	Continuing
University	80	64	16
TVET Institutions	58	42	16
Total	138	106	32

These students are enrolled in diverse disciplines — education, engineering, health sciences, business, ICT, and technical trades — fields that directly contribute to Kenya's workforce and economic development.

Each placement represents more than admission into an institution; it marks entry into opportunity, dignity, and long-term possibility.



Students listening in to one of the sessions during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

The Financial Reality

Rising Costs of Higher Education in Kenya

While the campaign has been impactful, implementation has revealed important structural challenges.

University

- University education costs remain high, particularly in specialised and technical programs.
- Many students applied for government scholarships and HELB loan. However, some students did not qualify for government support and others faced delays or missed application windows.

TVET Financing Gaps

- Limited access to fee revision mechanisms.
- Few structured government relief programs.
- Specialised tools and equipment add to costs.
- Financial burden heaviest in early training stages.

The unpredictability of fee structures and government financing reforms has required KCDF to be flexible and carefully plan its finances.

Early Impact & Transformation

Although most students are still in progress, early indicators are highly promising:

- High retention rates among supported students.
- Increased digital competency following ICT training.
- Strengthened professional confidence through mentorship.
- Growing entrepreneurial ambition among TVET students.
- Improved psychosocial well-being and life skills development.

Beyond statistics, the campaign has restored hope in families and communities where tertiary education once felt completely out of reach.

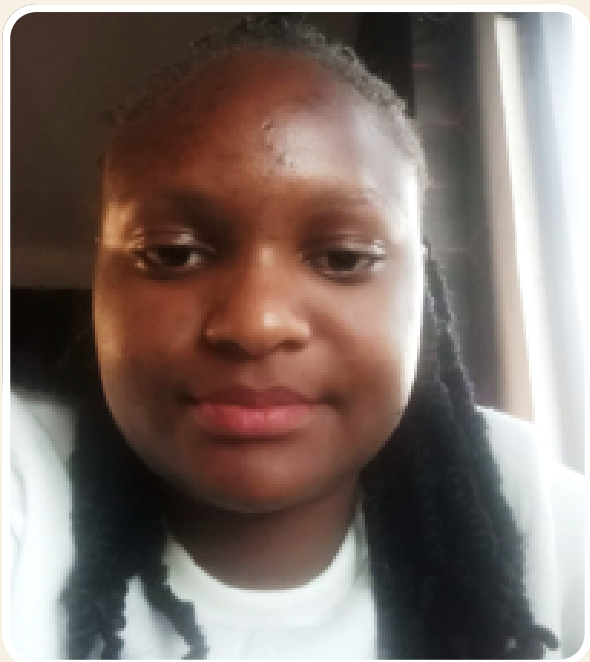


Students listening in to one of the sessions during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

Student Testimonies

Behind every statistic is a human story — of resilience, determination, and the transformative power of education. These are the voices of four young Kenyans whose lives have been changed by the KCDF Education Scholarship Programme.

STORY 1 — ELOSY GAKII



Elosy Gakii Mutugi



Tunyai Market



Machakos University – Bachelor of Economics & Finance

“I am deeply grateful for the support that has brought me this far, and I remain committed to working hard to make the most of this opportunity.”

My name is Elosy Gakii. I live at Tunyai Market with my elder sister and our 86-year-old grandmother, who is disabled and terminally ill. We have no land of our own and stay on public land. My grandmother is unable to work, and our family struggles daily to meet even basic needs.

My primary school education was supported by TCC, and my secondary school education was co-supported by Hope Trust KCDF. Without this help, I would not have been able to stay in school. I worked hard throughout my studies and completed Form Four last year, scoring a B- in my KCSE examinations.

Although I performed well, continuing to college seemed impossible because my family could not afford university fees. Today, I have joined Machakos University to pursue a Bachelor of Economics and Finance. This opportunity means everything to me. It gives me hope that I can build a stable future and eventually support my grandmother and sister.



Titus Kirimi



Tunyai Centre



KMTC Outspan Campus – Diploma in Nursing

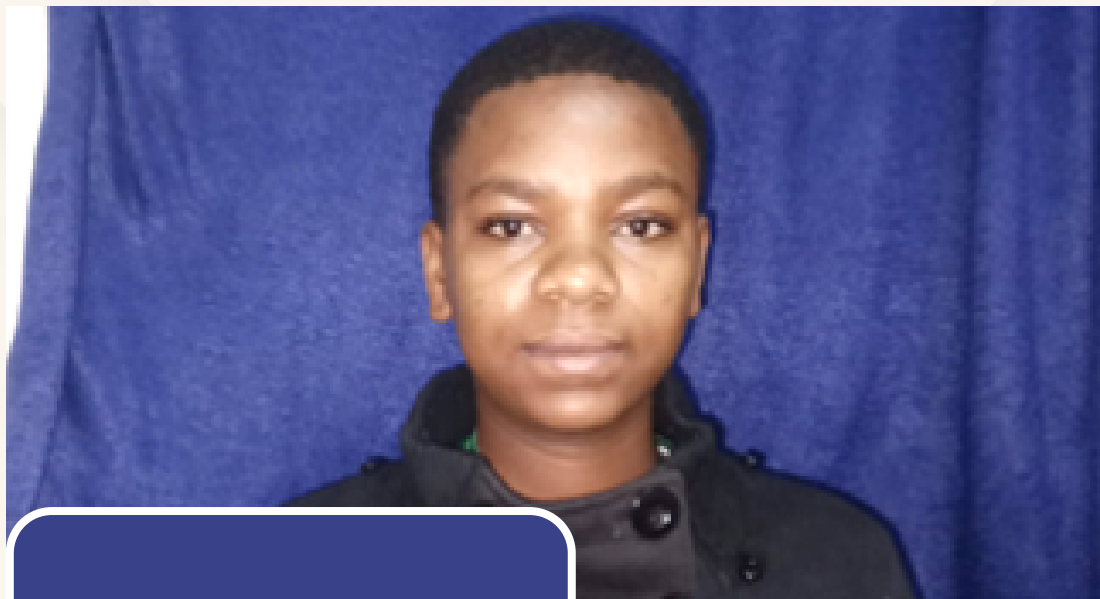
My name is Titus Kirimi Kinyua. I am an orphan, and I currently live at Tunyai Centre, which provides care, protection, and education support to vulnerable children. My younger sister, who is in Grade Four, also lives here and attends the Centre's OVC school the same school where I completed my primary education.

Our mother, who was a single parent, passed away while we were still young. She had been living on public land and was doing her best to provide for us. After her burial, the relative who had briefly taken us in abandoned us. With nowhere else to go, my sister and I were enrolled at the Centre, where we received care, stability, and the opportunity to continue with our education.

Last year, I sat for my KCSE examinations and scored a B plain. I was later admitted to pursue a Diploma in Nursing at Kenya Medical Training College, Outspan Campus. Being admitted to

KMTC was a dream come true. I have always wanted to work in the health sector so that I can serve communities that lack access to proper medical care, especially vulnerable children like those I grew up with. However, the cost of tuition and related expenses made it difficult to enroll without external support.

Through KCDF's "Let's Level the Playing Field" campaign, I have received the support I need to begin this journey. This scholarship is not just financial assistance; it is a second chance to build a stable future for myself and support my younger sister. My goal is to complete my Diploma in Nursing, secure employment, and ensure that my sister also receives the education she deserves. I want our story to be one of hope and transformation."



Mary Kanyaa



Thimu Village, Mwingi West, Kitui County



Kenyatta University – Bachelor of Economics

My name is Mary Kanyaa, and I come from Thimu Village in Mwingi West, Kitui County. I am the only girl in a family of four children, raised by parents who are peasant farmers relying on small, irregular jobs to support us. Despite the challenges, I have always believed that education would change my life.

After scoring 355 marks in primary school, I made the bold decision to apply to Katoteni

Secondary School, a higher-performing school. I went there alone, without school fees or support, but the Principal believed in me and admitted me. For two years, the school and well-wishers supported my basic needs. In Form Three, I ranked in position one out of 93 students and was appointed Student Secretary.

When I was selected for the KCDF scholarship in 2023, it gave me the stability I needed to focus fully on my studies. I successfully completed my KCSE examinations in 2024 and have now joined Kenyatta University to pursue a Bachelor of Economics. I am deeply grateful — this support has strengthened my determination to work hard and create a better future for my family.





“ The assistance I received from KCDF has been more than just financial support. It has been an investment in my future and a source of motivation throughout my academic journey. “

My name is Mohamed, a student from Wajir County currently pursuing a Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Surgery at Bomet Campus.

Growing up in Wajir, access to educational opportunities was not always easy. Like many young people from marginalised areas, financial challenges threatened to limit my ability to pursue higher education. However, KCDF came into my life at a critical moment and provided the support that allowed me to continue my studies with confidence and hope.

Knowing that KCDF believed in my potential inspired me to remain focused, work hard, and strive for academic excellence.

Today, I am proud to be pursuing a Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Surgery at Bomet Campus.

Mohamed Yussuf



Wajir County



KMTC Bomet Campus – Diploma in Clinical Medicine and Surgery

This opportunity is bringing me closer to my dream of serving communities through quality healthcare. My ambition is to become a competent and compassionate clinician who will contribute to improving health services, especially in underserved areas such as Wajir County and other marginalised regions.

The support from KCDF has relieved the burden on my family and enabled me to concentrate on my studies. It has given me hope, confidence, and the determination to overcome challenges and achieve my goals. I am committed to making the most of this opportunity and to becoming a responsible professional who will give back to society.



Lina Lenja Ajevi



Shamakhokho Ward



Masinde Muliro University – BA
Education

I come from Shamakhokho Ward, where my parents are small-scale farmers. For many years, my father worked as a driver in Sudan to help support our family and pay for our education. While working there, he was shot by bandits. The incident affected his health and forced him to stop working, and our family suddenly lost its main source of income.

Life became very difficult. With my father unable to work and my parents relying solely on farming, it was uncertain whether I would be able to continue my education. Despite the challenges, I remained focused on my studies because I have always believed that education is the key to changing my family's future.

Today, I am pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Education at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. Receiving support through KCDF's "Let's Level the Playing Field" campaign has made it possible for me to join a university and continue my studies without interruption. This support has strengthened my determination to work hard and create a better future for my family and me."

Lessons Learnt

Key insights from the 2025 Education Campaign

1 Access Is Not Enough

Providing admission support alone does not guarantee completion. Students require academic, financial, psychosocial, and professional support to persist.

2 Holistic Support Improves Retention

Combining tuition support with mentorship, ICT training, life skills, and internships significantly strengthens confidence and retention rates.

3 Early Engagement Strengthens Outcomes

Students who receive mentorship early demonstrate stronger professional identity, clearer career direction, and improved self-confidence.

4 Community & Donor Partnerships Are Critical

Collaborative philanthropy can mobilise significant resources and unlock opportunities for vulnerable youth.

5 Recognition and Motivation Matter

Sustained engagement of mentors requires structured communication and recognition mechanisms for long-term participation.

6 Education Restores Hope Beyond the Individual

The impact of tertiary access extends beyond students to families and communities, shifting mindsets about what is possible.



Students listening in to one of the sessions during the YESP Workshop at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies.

Sustainability & The Road Ahead

Building on a strong foundation

The campaign has laid a strong foundation, but sustaining impact requires continued partnership. KCDF's priorities include:

- Ensuring all 138 students progress and complete their studies.
- Strengthening corporate internship partnerships.
- Mobilising additional resources to address high-cost programmes.
- Treating education as a multi-year commitment through diverse partnerships.

Conclusion

The "Let's Level the Education Playing Field" campaign has demonstrated what collective investment can achieve. With Ksh 75 million raised and 138 students placed into higher learning, the campaign represents expanded access, strengthened resilience, and renewed belief in what is possible for young people from underserved communities.

The work continues — not just to enrol students, but to see them graduate, secure meaningful livelihoods, and become agents of transformation.

KCDF remains deeply grateful to the individuals, partners and donors who have made this impact possible.

For more information on the KCDF Education campaign, contact us via education@kcdf.or.ke or call us on (+254) 768 125 456

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