

Girls' Education in Kenya: Kagwiria's Story in her Words!

by Dickson Mugendi David, February 7, 2012!

I am Kagwiria Teresa from Kimwirari, Thuura, in the Miriga Mieru East Division in Meru County. I started my primary education and enrolled in standard one in 1978 at Mukongorone Primary School.

In primary school I studied very hard aiming to join high school for further studies. At home I helped my parents with home chores which I did very fast so as to do my studies. I usually made sure that my parents were happy with me. This was also applied to my beloved teachers at school.

In school, the teachers were happy with me due to my obedience. I made sure that whatever the teacher asked for was brought, and in abundance. I normally shared some with those who hadn't. This made me have many friends to share with on academic issues.

When I joined upper primary, I was very active in games. We performed traditional dances and played volleyball and netball. These were my favorite games, but I even practiced running and walking races.

I sat for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E) in 1988. I tried all my ways and means to achieve the goal and finally made it. When the results were out, everybody discussed my results cheerfully in the entire community. To my poor parents, this was a bother to them since every member of the community was hoping to hear that I joined a very good high school.

After sometime I received a letter to join Ikuu Girls Secondary School. Happily I went to my father and keenly read the letter to him translating each and every word ensuring that he understood everything from that letter.

At that moment my father could not utter a word of response about the letter. As the days went on I kept on reminding him of the reporting date. He only told me to wait for the day to come but nothing was being done as we waited for that important day. When the day came there was no response so I only sat down and started crying although it was not the solution.

I was astonished to see my comrades, even those that I was ahead of them, carrying their luggage joining secondary schools. I wept continuously. This made me lose a kilogram of weight every day. The only thing I had was to pray God to give me comfort and hope in life. Since the Almighty God is a God of mercy he gave me comfort and guided me to do something else.

Having no hope for the future, I politely asked my mother to share a small portion of land just for planting pepper near a stream which ran along the lower part of my father's shamba. With guidance from the Agricultural Officer, I prepared the land and planted some pepper. Luckily the project was successful and I even managed to grow more crops. I got little money that supported me in my life. The only challenge I had was when my colleagues came home for the holidays. I felt desperate and very hurt. I stayed at home for four years.

Later I met with a man with whom I fell in love and finally we got married in the church. We joined and started for a new home as a couple. For a long time I blamed myself for getting married in the midst of so many problems. I thought things would be perfect but I was to persevere. I prayed God not to go back to my parents because things could be worse. The only thing I was thinking about was going back to school and fulfill my dreams. The challenge was that I feared to tell this to my husband.

As the years passed I became more disturbed since by then I was a mother of three. In addition to this was a community leader who served as an area manager. I had so many disputes to settle from my entire family and also from the community members.

Having all these duties to perform I was only a poor farmer who relied only on the rains. With all these challenges I thanked my Almighty God since he has never abandoned me. One day as we attended a meeting at the Chief's Camp, the news was passed to the

community members that a Non-formal Secondary School for Adult's Education was being launched. The news made me feel as if I was in a new world. When I returned home I was confused on how to break the good news to my husband.

After one week I gathered courage and told my husband that I wanted to join the school. He only told me that if am ready I can. His words made me feel encouraged. Having heard this I look forward for proper arrangements.

The first step was to take my two younger sons to a private school. This created ample time for my studies because they never came home for lunch. The next thing was to ensure that my elder son in secondary school was not send home for school fees so I was to clear all the fee balance.

Now the question that remained was where do I get that school? Finally I joined the Mulathankari Department of TINFE Secondary School.

I joined the Institute in 2010. There were community women groups who held meetings in the compound. I joined and became a member of A Victory Self Help Women's Group. The group met during class time and I asked the teacher for permission to take my contribution to the group. When the group started a project of Table Banking this benefited me a lot because the group assisted me with some money which in return I was to pay with just a 10% interest.

This made it easier for me to pay my school fees and also my children's fees. I was also able to support my entire family with the money.



Kagwiria receives money for School fees from Dickson Ntwiga, Dickson's emphasis on the girl/child education in Kenya is contributing considerably to the fight against abject poverty especially in the rural areas.

I also joined the Education Booster which boosted my family a lot. This was a big surprise to my husband because he wondered how I managed the learning and attending other family duties.

The whole of that year I worked very hard until the year 2011 when I sat for my Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) having successfully completed the approved course.

In conclusion, I'm hoping for good results. My aim is to have a job and educate my children without relying on my husband as my poor mother relied on my father and I ended up having no proper education.

I hope Solidarity House CBO, a charitable organization that is empowering women to fight poverty in Kenya, can do more to help many poor girls who have discontinued their education due to the lack of school fees.



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