



Magazine

❖ Parental Advisory

Parental advisory



Dear Auntie,

Do I quit school?

I am a 17 year girl, the second last born in a family of 5. My elder sister is pursuing a Bed degree course at the University of Nairobi, and my sister and I are classmates in a secondary day school in one of the slums here in Nairobi. Mum parents separated when I was in class two and we have been raised by our mum, who is a house-help to a certain Indian family in Peponi – Westlands. Mum's earnings are barely enough for us. Rent food her monthly fare and other small expenses. I feel all these things weighing on me heavily. I always feel it when mum is having to encourage us, telling of how life is and that we should do our best. I feel that I am old enough to quit school and look for a job so that I can manage some important things in my life.

The bitter part is that all this experiences are a thing of the past to my younger sister who got in love with a boy in the neighborhood and is pregnant. This boy is a drop out and has since denied responsibility. Soon she will have to involuntarily discontinue schooling as she cannot learn in her current state.

I do not have someone to share with because I feel no one can understand and help me. I am considering quitting school and looking for a job or finding a serious partner to get married and have a good family like other successful people.

Kindly advice. Do I quit school?

Auntie says ...

Thanks my daughter for being candid enough to share your story. There are many young people who are passing through many difficult experiences in their schooling. You need to be encouraged by the fact that you are not alone in this path. There are other young people in the slums who have no one to pay for their fees or offer care. For this you need to appreciate and thank God.

I really sympathize with you in this situation, but let's look at some of the options that you have and their returns in the long run.

To start with you need to understand that the primary function of education is prepare us for the future. We are living in a fast-paced world where without education it is hard to manage. The beauty of education is not in knowing how to read and write like our parents and grandparents used to consider in the yester years, rather the beauty of learning is acquiring the necessary



knowledge and skills enough to help us to get a good job and help other people, and this should be your mum, relatives and many more.

It is okay for your mum to keep reminding you of the importance of working hard. This I believe should increase your infinity for success rather than break your heart, because your mum is doing so out of her great concern about your future, she doesn't want to see you suffering and finding life hard. Moreover, she is wisely fulfilling her parental, spiritual and in fact legal obligation of schooling you. For this you need to thank her even though it is painful.

Reconsider your option because it is not the best. it will be more costly in the long run. Education is the light to your future life. Quitting school is like jumping from a moving train before you reach your destination just because it feels uncomfortable. In this case as long as the train is moving you are assured of your destination, once you jump out, there are very many risks which are very uncomfortable in many ways that inside the train. It is obvious that by jumping out, you will not reach your destination.

In the same way, quitting school will make you not to attain your academic and life goals. You will surely not experience the good life that you desire from other people. Remember that you do not know the path that those people took in the schooling times. Before you admire the life of other people, find out the price of their success and you will be surprised at the fact that some of them passed through the worst than you can imagine.

You have talked about finding a job. I can assure you that it will be more challenging getting a job. If you get, then you will be exploited very much because at secondary level one does not have the relevant skills to attract a well paying job. You may only land in a casual job which will leave you in great emotional and physical turmoil that you can expect. To support a basic standard life, you will be forced to work for long and extra hours which will become very unpleasant that your current experiences. Do not quit schooling my dear daughter.

Remember, by completing your school. You will get a good job and you will be able to solve some of these problems. Why do you have to unnecessarily handicap yourself?

Do not take an easy option. The time of planting is always hard but everybody rejoices at harvest time. Do not reverse the wisdom in this statement. The future holds a great reward for you. Do not give up. Your sister may have fallen a bit but she can still regain and be victorious. Stand with her and show her your full support so that she does not become desperate. Remember, today it may be her and tomorrow it may be you. Do not write her off. It is only God who understands our life and experiences.

Consider talking to your church pastor about some of these issues, or find a faithful and honest person to share with. Sometimes we may die struggling when we had help at our fingertips.

Finally, I wish you all the best in your academic and life journey,



We learn together, walk and laugh together, yet we are bitterly weeping from inside. Send your questions and concerns to Auntie Florence about various issues affecting your academic performance. florence@excellencestudentmagazine.com.

Auntie Florence is a student counselor at ESM and a graduate from the University of Nairobi. She has a wealth of experience in student counseling and assisting children from vulnerable backgrounds.

What is your comment?



❖ International Studies

image

Studying abroad refers to the process of a student seeking educational opportunities in another country than their own. Countries around the world are establishing world-class universities specializing in different fields for students in different countries to enjoy. Choosing a destination and program of study

is one of the most important activities that a student should always consider.

A good choice of a perfect study program and the country to study in is essential in ensuring completion of the course designed and graduating to land into the predestined career. Many students' first impulse, when it comes to choosing where to study abroad is simply narrowing their choices on each country on a list that they have sampled. However, it is important to realise that there is much more to a country. Here are some of the important considerations that students can always examine in their quest for furthering their studies abroad.

Should I study from a less conventional or common destination?

Many students from Africa and other continents decide on colleges and universities in Western Europe and the United States for different reasons. First, it stems from the idea that countries in these regions have renowned world-class universities that have produced exemplary leaders and experts in different fields. Institutions of higher learning in Europe offer different tantalizing mixes of culture, languages, history, food and different familiar amenities.

Studying abroad presents an opportunity for students to develop cross-cultural competencies, which are essential in the management of global business organisations.

On the other hand, less conventional destinations have continued to attract less numbers of international students in the past. Some of these destinations include Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America among other countries. It is important for students to note that any destination that one chooses to study from provides different kinds of experiences and challenges that can enhance or affect an individual's studies. Therefore, good research should always precede the decision to choose a preferred study destination.

Should I expect a culture that is familiar or different from mine?

Studying from a different country means that one is bound to face a culture that is far much different from the one that they have grown to understand. Most students studying abroad always expect to get a job in a multinational organization or work in any institution that enjoys a global presence.

Cross-cultural management can be a challenge especially when some practices in the new culture are in contrast to the culture that a student has been raised to understand. This means



that student needs to understand some of the cultural practices in the new country and learn how to adopt them during the time of their study. International students need to appreciate the fact that a "good" choice of a study abroad destination should always be that which suits best in their aims and aspiration.

Do I decide to go for a non-English speaking nation?

Many students going to study in a foreign country are supposed to have full mastery of the language being spoken in that country. This understanding makes it easier for them to not only understand their instructors and tutors but also to interact with other students. Therefore, the focus should not just be on a country that speaks English, but on a country that speaks a language that you understand.

Therefore, for a student, the focus should always be on whether they understand the language being used in their country of choice for further studies and how they can undertake the required language proficiency tests

Some English-speaking countries will expect students joining their universities to have passed the English proficiency tests before accepting them. This also applies to countries that do not speak English; they have their own mechanisms by which they use in ensuring that

international students have mastered their language. Therefore, for a student, the focus should always be on whether they understand the language being used in their country of choice for further studies and how they can undertake the required language proficiency tests.

In general, studying abroad offers better opportunities for students wishing to undertake careers in global organisations and institutions. In the next issue, we shall focus on some of the important considerations when it comes to choosing a study program in international studies.

Peter Ndiritu

Mr. Peter Ndiritu is a student counselor at ESM and has extensive experience in international studies as an academic researcher and writer in the same field.



❖ The Excellent Grade Guide

Sciences and mathematics

All the subjects learnt in school are essential not only for one's career in future but also for enhancing the general quality of life of people on the face of the earth. Secondly, all people have peculiarities that offer them talents and gifting that are different from one person to another. This explains why some students are good in technical subjects that others, others are good in



Technology has given automation, while science has given the cure to so many diseases, raised awareness and made so many possibilities come close to us

humanities and so on. In our first focus on how to improve your grades in school, we shall be focusing on sciences and some of the opportunities that abound in this expansive field.

First of all it is important to understand, that science is an extremely important field. Technology has given automation, while science has given the cure to so many diseases, raised awareness and made so many possibilities come close to us. So the overall importance of science has a great recognition as well as respect amongst the educational and professional leaders regardless of the field they belong to.



Studying science and mathematics equips students with essential skills that will make them very employable, be that in a scientific or non-scientific arena. Science enables the student to become more confident in numeracy, gaining proficiency with figures and calculations that will prove invaluable when it comes to future employment. This 'mathematics within science' is more than just putting numbers into formulae; it involves analyzing data and understanding trends in the same way that businesses might examine market data or sales figures. Problem solving is another key skill that students master within science; while this is important within a practical or experimental setting, it is essential to employers in all fields, especially when it is extended to evaluating alternative solutions provided by others. In addition, students gain crucial experience in communication skills. By presenting their work, be it verbally or in writing, students become so competent at expressing a logical argument, debating and persuading, that it becomes second nature to them, rather than something to be awkward and embarrassed about – this of course is a skill which is indispensable in the workplace.

The skills gained from studying science and mathematics are versatile and transferable and are applicable to any profession; a foundation in science and mathematics can lead to a huge variety of career options in all sectors, beyond those that might be predicted. Science and mathematics are obviously relevant to many science-related jobs, such as engineering, information technology, medicine, psychology, sports science, music technology, animal health, forensics or astronomy, but they are also significant to working in banking, journalism, teaching, television, marketing, law, photography, art restoration, media and film production, to name but a few.

In addition to providing students with useful skills and making them highly employable, it has been shown that achieving further qualifications in science and mathematics bring greater



rewards in monetary terms in future employment when compared to other subjects. The research carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2005¹ showed that chemistry and physics university graduates earn on average 30% more than those with two 'A' levels but no degree. There is wide variation in the value of different degree subjects; for example the combination of enhanced employment and annual earnings suggests that graduates in chemistry and physics earn well above the average.

Science and mathematics are omnipresent in modern society; due to the unsustainable demands we make on the world's resources and the impact we have on our environment, the contribution of science is vital to ensure the survival of our planet by developing new or alternative solutions for everything we do from fuel production to waste disposal. With current issues such as gene therapy, MMR vaccines, nuclear power, oil depletion, genetically modified foods, bird flu and global warming, future scientists have a fascinating and crucial role to play, be it developing new communications solutions or contributing to make the world a better place.

Studying science and mathematics provides an excellent foundation, keeps options open and offers a good progression route either directly into employment or to higher education to study them or other related subjects further. By opting for science and mathematics, students could find themselves contributing to ensuring the future of the planet as well as safeguarding their own secure future in the world of employment.

In the proceeding episodes, we shall focus on other subjects and later examine how you can improve your grades in the subjects that you are studying as you journey towards your final exam. Bye!

Ondele Phanuel

Mr, Ondele Phanuel is a teacher with a wealth of experience from teaching in various international and local schools in Nairobi.



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❖ The Sudoku Puzzle Challenge

❖ Instructions

The aim of this game is to place a number from 1 to 9 in each black field. Each of the nine columns must contain the numerals from 1 to 9 exactly once. At the same time each of the nine rows must contain the numerals from 1 to 9 exactly once. Each of the outlined 3x3 regions must also contain the numerals from 1 to 9 exactly once.

		5			3	1		
	1		9	4			6	
7		9	6			3		5
6				8		2	1	
	5		3		2		7	
	9	3		1				6
1		6			8	9		7
	3			5	7		2	
		7	4			8		

Check out for the solution to this game in the next month's issue

		5			3	1		
	1		9	4			6	
7		9	6			3		5
6				8		2	1	
	5		3		2		7	
	9	3		1				6
1					8	9		7
	3			5	7		2	
		7	4			8		