

The Autobiography of Darius Mwaliko Mwatabu



Introduction

Life is a journey filled with twists and turns, joys and sorrows, and the profound moments that shape us into who we become. This is my story, the narrative of a life that has been both ordinary and extraordinary, filled with the experiences that have shaped my character and carved the path I now walk.

From the simple innocence of my childhood to the challenges I faced in my studies, from the warmth of family bonds to the deep friendships that sustained me, I've learned, grown, and found my place in this vast tapestry of existence. Through these pages, I invite you to join me on this journey, to traverse the passages of my life, and to glimpse the joys, sorrows, and lessons that have defined me.

In these words, you will find moments of laughter and tears, of dreams achieved and dreams deferred. You will meet the people who have left their Faiths on my heart and mind, for it is in these connections that the true essence of my story lies.

This autobiography is not just a recollection of events; it is a reflection on the lessons I've learned, the values I hold dear, and the dreams I continue to pursue. As I share my life's narrative, my hope is that it resonates with your own journey and perhaps provides inspiration or solace.

So, let us embark on this voyage together. With each page, we delve deeper into the chronicles of my existence, where every experience is a brushstroke that paints the canvas of my life. Thank you for sharing in my story; I hope it enriches your own in some way.

Chapter 1

Early Years and Family Beginnings

1. Birth and Early Childhood

I came into this world on 16th April, 1986, in the serene village of Kamang'ombe, nestled within the heart of Wusi Kishimba ward, Mwatate Sub-county, Taita Taveta County. This picturesque place, which became the backdrop of my early life, is a land of vitality and diversity.

Ngerenyi is not only a hub of economic activities but also a melting pot of social diversities. It is a place where various people from different walks of life come together, bringing their unique perspectives and traditions. The essence of community and the rich tapestry of cultures define this area. In the warm embrace of its people, I learned the values of unity, diversity, and the importance of harmonious coexistence.

One of the striking aspects of life in Ngerenyi is the diverse range of religions practiced. It's a place where different faiths coexist peacefully, offering an invaluable lesson in religious tolerance and understanding. In this environment, I was exposed to various belief systems, fostering my appreciation for the richness of spiritual diversity.

My early years were filled with the beauty of simplicity and the joy of exploration. The lush, green landscapes of Ngerenyi served as my playground, where I made the first of many cherished memories. In the embrace of my family and the vibrant surroundings of my birthplace, I began to carve my path, setting the foundation for the journey ahead.

Family Background:

I was born into a family of humble origins. My parents Simeon Mwatabu and Flora Wakio, raised us with unwavering love and dedication. We were a close-knit family of six, which included my four siblings. As Anglican, our family's faith played a fundamental role in our daily lives. The principles of our faith emphasized community, morality, and spirituality, instilling values that would remain with me throughout my life.

How I Grew Up

Our family faced significant financial challenges. We were not affluent by any means, and the resources available to us were limited. This financial constraint meant that we often had to be resourceful and frugal in our daily lives. My parents worked tirelessly to provide for our basic needs, and they instilled in us the importance of hard work and perseverance. From an early age, I learned to appreciate the value of simple pleasures and the significance of every opportunity that came our way. The struggles we faced due to financial limitations became a defining aspect of my early life, teaching me the importance of resilience and resourcefulness.

Character:

Growing up in a financially constrained environment, I developed a strong work ethic and determination. I witnessed my parents' unwavering commitment to their family, and this dedication served as a model for my own character. I learned the virtues of patience, gratitude, and empathy from a young age, as we had to make the most of what we had. These early experiences cultivated qualities such as humility and a deep appreciation for the efforts of those around me.

My family background and upbringing taught me the value of community and the significance of supporting one another during times of hardship. These early influences became the cornerstone of my character, shaping me into a person who values relationships, resilience, and the importance of helping others.

In retrospect, my family's background and the financial constraints we faced not only instilled in me a strong sense of responsibility but also served as a source of motivation. It drove me to pursue opportunities for personal growth and academic achievement, ultimately leading to my journey as a college student. The lessons learnt in those formative years continue to guide my life and character, reminding me of the importance of perseverance and gratitude as I progress through life's challenges and triumphs.

Chapter 2

School days a formative years

Preschool Life

Preschool life was the initial step of my formal education, and although memories from those years have faded with time, they remain etched in my mind as the foundation of my academic journey.

I embarked on my educational voyage in the heart of Kungu Primary School's baby class. The year was 1992, and while my recollections of this period are hazy, I can still picture the vibrant surroundings and the bustling atmosphere of that small school. It was a time of firsts, where everything was a new and exciting adventure. The world was an open book, and I was eager to explore its pages.

Nursery followed in 1993, a year that comes into clearer focus in my memories. I vividly recall my teacher, Mrs. Rose Mwakisha, a kind and patient educator who introduced me to the joys

of writing and drawing. While my skills were rudimentary, I eagerly practiced the art of putting pencil to paper, striving to create my first strokes and shapes. The part I cherished the most was when she would hand me my coloring book, filled with outlines of various shapes. The simple act of coloring those shapes with crayons was an enchanting experience, as it allowed me to infuse life and color into the world on paper.

In 1994, I transitioned to class one, where my education continued under the guidance of Mr. Paul and Mrs. Rose. This year was filled by a sense of discovery and, most importantly, fun. During physical education lessons, we would engage in children's games like "Mwakiviso" and "Oringo". These games not only filled our hearts with laughter but also imparted valuable community values and social skills. The friendships formed during these playful moments would stay with me for years to come.

Preschool life was not without its challenges, however. My family's financial constraints meant that my mother would pack red porridge for me and my siblings instead of the more conventional white tea and cake that other students enjoyed. Despite the occasional feeling of being different, I cherished the warmth and love that my family provided. It was during these formative years that I learned the importance of contentment and that the richness of life wasn't necessarily measured in material possessions.

As I approached the next milestone of my educational journey and the shift to Class 1, I faced a significant decision. I almost decided to repeat pre-unit, drawn by the allure of the children's games and the pure joy they brought. The innocence and carefree nature of those days were a source of great happiness. The worries of life and the uncertainties of the future were distant concerns. I found comfort in the present moment and the simple pleasures it offered.

Preschool life, despite its humble beginnings and financial constraints, gifted me with invaluable lessons in contentment, the joy of play, and the importance of community values. These early experiences played a significant role in shaping my character and instilling in me the values that would continue to guide me throughout my life's journey.

Lower Primary - Classes 1 to 3 (1994-1996) Lower primary, comprising classes 1 to 3, faired a significant phase of my early education. It was a time of transition and further exploration, as I continued my journey in the world of formal schooling.

In 1994, I took my first steps into the realm of Class 1. Mrs. Mwawasi and Mr Njumwa became my guiding light during this period, as she took on the responsibility of teaching me from class 1 to 3. Her patience, dedication, and nurturing approach left a lasting impression on me and set a positive tone for my lower primary years.

One of the highlights of lower primary was our physical education classes, where we engaged in a series of games. "Mwalimu Kenya" was a favorite among us, a game where we could take on the roles of police and thieves. The objective was simple: the police would chase the thieves, and upon capturing one, they would spread their arms as if forming a human barrier. To rescue the captured thief, someone had to pass beneath the outstretched arms, granting them freedom once more. It was a game of strategy, laughter, and camaraderie.

Another beloved game was "Mwakuzopilo," a spirited hide-and-seek adventure. One child would hide while the others began the search. The pursuit would continue until the hidden child was found. Meanwhile, those discovered in their hiding places would join the search, creating an exciting challenge of wits and agility.

Life during lower primary was a blend of ease and difficulty. It was during this time that we found simple pleasures, like sneaking into orchards to steal fruits. Although the thrill of indulging in the pilfered fruits was undeniable, it came with its share of consequences. The owners would occasionally chase us away, not necessarily for eating the fruits but for the havoc we wreaked among the crops planted beneath the trees.

My mischievous adventures were not without their share of parental repercussions. My mother, understandably, was not always pleased with my exploits. This led to frequent disciplinary actions, with her resorting to the proverbial rod to correct my wayward tendencies. However, despite her strictness, I remained undeterred in my youthful pursuits, undeterred by the prospect of discipline.

One of my responsibilities during lower primary was tending to the family's livestock. This primarily involved grazing cows, and most notably, goats. Goats, known for their agility, posed

a significant challenge. To counter their nimbleness, I would secure ropes around my stomach, allowing me to maintain some level of control. Nevertheless, goats remained resourceful, and they often led me on a merry chase, leaving me with enduring memories and a few scars that served as a testament to my experiences.

During this phase, my father made the decision to pursue a college education, leaving my mother to take charge of our care. Her firm hand and disciplined approach often led to disagreements and disagreements with my young self. I resented her strictness, but as time passed, I came to appreciate the valuable life lessons she imparted.

Lower primary served as a crucial period of exploration, play, and learning. It was a time of balance, where the innocence of childhood intersected with the evolving responsibilities and expectations of growing up. These early experiences, both joyful and challenging, contributed to the formation of my character and prepared me for the chapters that lay ahead in my educational journey and personal development.

Upper Primary - Class 4 to 8 (1997-2001)

Upper primary Faithed a crucial phase in my educational journey, spanning from Class 4 to 8, covering the years 1997-2001. It was a time of significant change, challenges, and personal growth.

However, Kungu Primary proved to be a financial strain on my parents, they had made a decision to hold on in order to shape my academics and moral achievements. This transition turned out to be transformative. This change brought about a newfound determination and focus. I consistently topped my class, leaving my classmates in awe as I achieved grades that set me apart as a top performer.

Staying at Kungu for two years, in Classes 5 and 6 (198-1999), I continued to excel academically, maintaining my position among the top three students in my class. However, the journey was not without its challenges. In the subsequent years, my grades began to experience a decline, even though I was still among the top performers. I remember bringing home my

third term report card to my father which I had altered the marks and this action agitated him so much that I received a beating that I had never experienced from him. Although I had been promoted to standard 7, the marks I attained were so low that I made a decision to do better in my next year.

In Class 8, in 2001, I made the commitment to move back to school and made a decision to behave like a boarding student, an opportunity that presented itself as I aimed to enhance my academic performance. However, my journey at the school was Faithed by a significant challenge—an outbreak of a skin disease. The disease spread among the students due to shared water containers and bathrooms, affecting many, including me. Fortunately, with proper medical treatment and care, I was able to recover and regain my health.

Determined to excel in my studies and regain my position as a top-performing student, I upped my game and consistently ranked among the top three students in my class. As I entered the final year of upper primary, my diligence and hard work paid off. I performed exceptionally well, earning a good grade that opened the doors to attending a prestigious high school in the country.

The years of upper primary were a dynamic and formative period of my life. The challenges I faced and the transitions I underwent shaped my resilience, determination, and commitment to my education. It was a chapter of transformation, where my aspirations and hard work paved the way for a brighter future, preparing me for the high school journey that lay ahead.

High School Years - Form 1 to Form 4 (2002-2005)

My high school journey, which spanned from 2002-2005, from Form 1 to Form 4, Faithed a crucial phase in my education. The transition from primary school to high school brought with it a new set of challenges and opportunities.

As I entered the world of high school, I quickly realized that the good grades I had earned in primary school were no longer the sole determining factor of my academic future. It wasn't my fault that I was born into a family facing financial constraints, and my parents made the decision to enroll me in Kenyatta boys High school, a school they could afford.

Located in within Taita Taveta County, the school had one refutable feature that became a source of daily inspiration for me. It stood alongside a breathtaking lake, offering me the opportunity to marvel at the serene waters each morning and whenever I desired. The stunning view provided solace in an environment that often presented challenges.

The conditions at the school were far from ideal. The weather brought sweltering heat, making it a constant challenge to remain focused on studies and co-curricular activities. To make matters more difficult, the quality of food served at the school was subpar, a far cry from the meals I had enjoyed during my primary school years.

What added to the difficulty of my high school experience was the discrimination I faced. Many students in the school openly discriminated against me for my Kisii heritage, a dynamic that often created a hostile and divisive atmosphere. The verbal taunts and bullying took a toll on my emotional well-being, leaving me in a constant state of frustration.

Fed up with the relentless bullying, I decided to take matters into my own hands when I moved to Form 2 in 2016. I began standing up to the bullies and swiftly put an end to the harassment. From that point forward, I resolved not to allow anyone to mistreat another student in my presence.

In Form 3, which was the year 2017, I made a pivotal decision regarding my academic path. I chose to drop some subjects and focus on the ones in which I excelled. My selected subjects included Chemistry, Biology, Physics, History, Christian Religious Education, Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili. This strategic shift allowed me to concentrate on my strengths and maximize my academic potential.

In Form 4, after completing my studies, I was rewarded for my hard work with an exceptional grade. This achievement not only paved the way for me to join a reputable university but also granted me the opportunity to pursue a program of my choice. The years of perseverance, overcoming adversity, and academic commitment had culminated in a result that opened doors to a brighter future.

The high school years were Faithed by resilience, self-discovery, and the determination to surmount obstacles. The challenges faced during this period became stepping stones to a

promising future, providing me with the confidence and motivation to embark on the next chapter of my educational journey.

Chapter 3.

Academic Pursuits and Campus Life - 2020 to Present

The years from 2020 to the present have been a transformative period in my life, Faithed by my academic journey and the experiences of campus life. During this time, I made important decisions about my education and embarked on a path of self-discovery and growth.

First Year (2020 to 2021): The Transition to University Life

Following the completion of my high school education, the next significant step was choosing a program for my tertiary studies. While I had always harbored a passion for Doctor, my perspective shifted after attending a rally where President Uhuru Kenyatta spoke at Kisii Stadium. During his address, he emphasized the importance of Bachelor of science in information technology (IT) in modern Technology and the professional world. This moment served as a turning point, motivating me to delve into this field.

After conducting extensive research and understanding the various facets of BSc IT made the pivotal decision to pursue this program. The curriculum encompassed a wide range of subjects, Computer Programming, Data structure, calculus, Electronics, etc. .This choice set me on a unique and intellectually stimulating path.

My journey into higher education led me to Nyeri, where I enrolled at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. As I embarked on this new phase of my life, I encountered a fresh set of challenges and opportunities. I entered a world where fancy classrooms, state-of-the-art

lecture halls, and well-equipped conference facilities became part of my daily life. However, the contrast between my background and that of many of my peers was stark. While I arrived at the university through my own efforts, other students were chauffeured in stylish modern cars, some of which were vehicles I had once dreamt of. Their attire reflected affluence and sophistication, making me feel like an outsider in the beginning.

The encounter with the different students from different tribes, different style different economical backgrounds and even different political standards made me focus in my studies in order to achieve my desired goals. This also brought beauty in the unity of diversity. I did well in my first year which gave me a green light to my second year of study.

Second Year (2021 to 2022): Academic Growth and Hands-On Experience

In my second year as a university student, my passion for my chosen program continued to flourish. Although I encountered challenges such as a lack of course materials, I adopted a proactive approach by borrowing resources and seeking additional learning opportunities. These hurdles only fueled my determination to excel in my studies.

As I delved deeper into my coursework, I gained a deeper understanding it. The knowledge I acquired further solidified my love for the field. Alongside my regular studies, I had the privilege of undertaking an internal attachment, which exposed me to the practical applications of BSc IT. This experience provided me with invaluable insights into how these technologies can be utilized in real-world scenarios, including structural design which included designing of structures and even drawings using different softwares i.e. AutoCAD.

My second year of university was Faithed by academic growth, hands-on learning, and an even greater appreciation for my chosen field of study. I was inspired by the potential of BSc IT) to make a significant impact in a variety of domains, and I was eager to continue my educational journey to explore these possibilities further.

Although I had high hopes in pursuing my course, it became challenging for my parents to cater for both my rent and my school fees given that there were four siblings also depending

on the same sources. This forced me to take an academic leave in order to help my parents raise some Harvesting Coffee , being watchman at sasini , amount which can cater for me in my studies. I enrolled myself in doing different businesses i.e. Ha even selling some cooked ‘bhajias’ from door to door. This led me to do my second year examinations in the year 2021 where I passed my exams and proceeded to my third year of study.

Third year Third Year (2022-2023) - Deepening Knowledge in BSc IT)

The third year of my university journey, spanning from 2022 to 2023, was a period of profound academic exploration and hands-on experience, further solidifying my expertise in Structural Engineering as it was my area of interest. I decided to specialize in structures and all things related to structures. This year brought with it a deepening of knowledge and an expansion of practical skills.

External Attachment at the Kenya Wildlife Service

During this pivotal year, I embarked on an external attachment at the Kenya Wild Life Service, a dynamic organization at the forefront of structural activities in the country. Here, I had the opportunity to apply my theoretical knowledge, gaining hands-on experience while forging connections with experienced professionals in the field. I obtained knowledge in both the office and field experiences.

1 office experiences

At the KWS office in Nyeri County, I learnt a lot of things for example accreditation of skilled workers and site supervisors, project registration and contractor registration. In the same office I also learnt on communication skills with the clients who walk into the office day to day and also built networks with the members I interacted with both in the office and out of the office.

Although in the first few days I was prone to work anxiety due to the new environment, I learnt to adjust myself and mingled with the colleagues nicely. This experience brought me to different heights and potentiality including teamwork.

2. field experiences

During my stay in the KWS office, I learnt so many things concerning my course i.e. network installation in the field, animal tracking systems how they work, digital payment systems and human resource management system.

Fourth Year (2023 - Present) - Culmination and Research

Returning to my academic institution after my attachment experience marked the beginning of my fourth and final year of university, where I am currently. This year is a culmination of my academic journey, a time for reflection, application, and further exploration within the field of Civil Engineering.

1. Project – Kenya Masai Market Management System

In my final year my project was Kenya Masai Market Management System, a transformative digital platform designed to reinvigorate and modernize traditional Masai markets in Kenya, preserving their cultural heritage while addressing longstanding challenges. KMMS leverages an AI-based authentication module which is a supervised machine learning technique, specifically employing Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for image classification. It begins with collecting a diverse dataset, followed by preprocessing to ensure uniformity. Relevant features, such as images and descriptions, will be used to train the CNN model, which is rigorously evaluated for accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score.

This project is a testament to the practical applications of BSc IT in addressing critical environmental concerns. It is also an opportunity for me to contribute to the body of knowledge within the field and make a positive impact on coastal ecosystems and the communities that rely on them.

2. Continuous Learning and Knowledge Enhancement

While my final year represents the culmination of my formal education, it also signifies the beginning of a lifelong journey of continuous learning and knowledge enhancement within the field of BSc IT). As the field continues to evolve with advancements in technology, I remain committed to staying updated on the latest trends, tools, and applications.

I recognize that BSc IT) are integral to a wide range of industries, from environmental management systems and urban planning to agriculture and disaster response (IOT). Therefore, my focus is not limited to completing my academic journey but extends to honing my skills, networking with professionals, and participating in relevant workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Chapter 4

Challenges and Growth - A Journey Defined by Resilience

My journey through education, from primary school to university, has been Faithed by numerous challenges that have shaped my character and driven my growth. These challenges, though formidable, have served as catalysts for personal development and unwavering determination.

1. Lacking of Fees and Learning Materials

Growing up in a family with limited financial resources, the challenge of affording school fees and essential learning materials was a constant companion. However, this obstacle taught me

resourcefulness. I became adept at seeking out alternative ways to access books and study materials, including borrowing from peers, utilizing community resources, and finding scholarships or financial assistance when available.

2. Poor Background

Coming from a disadvantaged background presented its own set of challenges. My family's economic struggles made it difficult to meet even the basic needs, let alone invest in extracurricular activities or educational enrichment. Nevertheless, this background instilled in me a strong work ethic and a profound appreciation for the value of education. It fueled my determination to rise above my circumstances and pursue my academic aspirations.

3. Being Pulled - High School

High school brought a unique set of challenges, including the experience of being pulled. This form of bullying was a test of my resilience and character. Instead of succumbing to the pressure, I chose to stand up for myself and protect my peers from such harassment. This difficult experience taught me the importance of courage and standing up for what is right.

4. Pressure from Rich Students and Their Lifestyle

High school also exposed me to the contrasting lives of more affluent students. Their opulent lifestyles, often characterized by fancy cars and fashionable attire, created a sense of disparity. I learned not to be envious but rather to draw motivation from these differences. I focused on my own path, using their successes as inspiration to work harder to achieve my goals.

5. Failing in Some Units Due to Inadequate Preparation

Failing in certain units during my academic journey was a painful experience. However, these failures were not the end but stepping stones to improvement. They taught me the importance of meticulous preparation and time management. With each setback, I refined my approach to studies and developed a stronger commitment to continuous learning.

6. Poverty

The overarching challenge of poverty has been a constant companion throughout my life. It has been a motivator, a source of resilience, and a reminder of the importance of hard work. Despite the difficulties poverty brought, it never deterred me from pursuing my education and aspiring for a better future.

Chapter 6

Inspirations

Life is often filled with challenges, but it is also brimming with dreams and aspirations that drive us forward, providing motivation and purpose. My journey, like many others, is Faithed by a series of dreams and goals that I aim to achieve in the years ahead.

1. Graduating

The immediate aspiration that lies ahead is the completion of my university education. Graduating will Faith a significant milestone, a culmination of years of hard work, dedication,

and a commitment to learning. It represents not only academic achievement but also the unlocking of new opportunities and the gateway to a promising career.

2. Getting an Internship in a Big Company

Following graduation, I aspire to secure an internship in a renowned and reputable company, particularly in the field of IT . This opportunity will allow me to gain hands-on experience, apply my knowledge in a professional setting, and learn from experts in the field. It is a stepping stone to further career growth.

3. Getting a Job

Securing a stable and fulfilling job in my chosen field is a significant goal. This step signifies the beginning of a professional career where I can contribute to projects, make a meaningful impact, and continue to expand my knowledge and skills. It also Faiths financial independence and the ability to support myself and my family.

4. Doing BSc IT) Freelancing in My Free Time

In addition to my primary job, I hope to engage in freelancing in the realm of BSc IT) during my free time. Freelancing provides the opportunity to take on independent projects, work with a diverse clientele, and diversify my experience. It also offers the flexibility to explore a range of projects that align with my interests.

5. Building a Flat Roof, Fancy Modern Mansion House with a Swimming Pool

One of my long-held dreams is to build a luxurious, modern mansion with a flat roof and a stunning swimming pool. This aspiration is not only a symbol of personal achievement but also a testament to the dedication and hard work that have propelled me to success. The house will be a sanctuary for my family and a place to create lasting memories.

6. Buying a Car, My Dream Mercedes

Owning a Mercedes, which has been my dream car for years, is a personal milestone that I aspire to achieve. It represents the culmination of years of hard work and financial stability. The car will not only serve as a mode of transportation but also a symbol of personal achievement.

