

MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY AND GROWTH

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1. INTRODUCTION

I was born on January 4, 2002, in Kabati, a village in Laikipia West District, Sipili Division, Wangwachi Location, and Kabati Sub-location. As the firstborn child of Joseph and Rose, my early years were deeply rooted in our village's cultural traditions and communal spirit. Growing up amidst the vast plains of Laikipia, surrounded by natural beauty, instilled in me a profound appreciation for life's simple yet meaningful aspects.

My parents, both hardworking and deeply committed to our family's well-being, played a crucial role in shaping my values and aspirations. Being the eldest of six children, I often took on responsibilities early, fostering a sense of leadership and accountability. My siblings and I shared a strong bond, built through shared experiences, whether it was helping with household chores or exploring the fields and valleys around our home.

Our parents emphasized the importance of education and hard work, principles that have guided me throughout my life. The lessons learned from my upbringing in Laikipia have been instrumental in my personal and academic journey, fostering a strong sense of resilience, community, and an unwavering quest for knowledge. This autobiography is a reflection of my life's path, from my humble beginnings in Kabati to the pursuit of my dreams and ambitions.

2. EARLY LIFE IN LAIKIPIA

As the firstborn child in a family of six, I often found myself taking on responsibilities early. My parents, Joseph and Rose, worked hard to provide for us, instilling in me the importance of discipline, resilience, and a strong work

ethic. The village community in Laikipia was close-knit, and we lived in harmony with our neighbors, bound by shared values and a communal spirit. Our days were filled with simple pleasures exploring the fields, tending to livestock, and playing with other children in the village.

Some of my fondest memories come from playing with handmade toys. My friends and I would craft paper kites and let them soar high above the plains, their colorful tails fluttering in the breeze. We also made wooden bikes from scraps of timber and old wheels, and those creations became our treasured possessions. Street football matches, played with makeshift balls made of tightly bound polythene bags, were another regular activity. These games were often competitive, full of laughter, excitement, and an infectious sense of joy.

Despite the freedom and fun, discipline was a constant in our lives. Our parents maintained a firm hand, quick to correct any missteps. Whether it was coming home late, neglecting chores, or misbehaving, the occasional scolding or punishment was a reminder that our freedom came with responsibility.

The beauty and simplicity of life in Laikipia taught me invaluable lessons. The vast open skies and sense of community fostered in me a deep respect for others and a strong desire to work hard and achieve my goals. These formative years laid the foundation for my personal and academic journey, shaping my values and aspirations as I continue to pursue my dreams.

3. LESSONS LEARNT DURING MY EARLY LIFE

Growing up in Kabati, Laikipia West District, taught me invaluable lessons that continue to guide me in life. From an early age, my parents, Joseph and Rose, instilled in me the value of hard work and discipline. Their commitment to our family and the sacrifices they made to ensure we had a better future taught me that success comes from consistent effort and perseverance. Whether I was helping with household chores, tending to livestock, or assisting with farm work, I quickly learned the importance of taking responsibility and giving my best in everything I do.

Living in a close-knit community also had a profound impact on me. Our village was like an extended family, where people looked out for one another, shared resources, and celebrated together. The strength of community fostered a sense of belonging and reinforced the idea that we rise by lifting others. These early experiences nurtured in me the desire to always contribute positively to the people around me, no matter the challenges we face.

Resilience was another key lesson I took from my upbringing in Laikipia. Life wasn't always easy weather conditions often impacted our livelihoods, and there were moments when our family had to make do with limited resources. Yet, through these difficulties, I learned to persevere and adapt. These challenges taught me that setbacks are temporary, and with determination, they can be overcome.

The simplicity of life in Kabati also shaped my worldview. My childhood was filled with joy despite the modest resources available to us. I found happiness in playing football with makeshift balls, crafting kites out of paper, and riding wooden bikes with my friends. This taught me to appreciate life's simple pleasures and to cultivate gratitude, regardless of circumstances. Lastly, the emphasis my parents placed on education shaped my ambitions. They firmly believed that education was the key to unlocking a brighter future, and this belief motivated me to work hard in school and pursue knowledge with dedication and passion.

These lessons of hard work, community, resilience, gratitude, and the importance of education are the cornerstones of my life, shaping my journey and helping me stay grounded as I continue to pursue my goals and dreams.

4. MY EARLY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION LIFE (2007-2016)

My educational journey began in 2007 at Kabati Primary School, located in Laikipia West District, Sipili Division, Wangwachi Location, and Kabati Sub-location. Starting school was a significant milestone in my life, transitioning from the carefree days of early childhood to the structured environment of formal education. Kabati Primary School provided a nurturing environment where I could begin to develop my academic skills and explore new areas of interest.

During my years at Kabati, I was introduced to foundational subjects such as mathematics, literacy, and science. The supportive and dedicated teachers at Kabati played a crucial role in my early development. They fostered a love for learning and encouraged curiosity, helping me build a strong academic foundation. The lessons learned during these formative years were essential in shaping my intellectual abilities and instilling a sense of discipline and responsibility.

In addition to academics, my time at Kabati Primary School was marked by involvement in various extracurricular activities. I participated in school events, sports, and cultural activities, which helped me develop teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. These activities were not only enjoyable but also contributed to my overall growth and development.

The values and skills I acquired during my years at Kabati Primary School laid a solid foundation for my future educational pursuits. The emphasis on hard work, respect, and community support was instrumental in preparing me for the challenges of secondary education and beyond. My experiences at Kabati have had a lasting impact, shaping my approach to learning and personal development as I continued on my academic journey.

5. LESSONS LEARNT

My years at Kabati Primary School were instrumental in imparting several valuable lessons that have continued to influence my life. One of the foremost lessons was the importance of discipline and responsibility. The structured environment of the school instilled in me the need to adhere to rules, complete assignments on time, and take ownership of my actions. This sense of responsibility extended beyond academics, shaping my approach to various aspects of life.

I also learned that hard work and perseverance are crucial for success. Whether it was mastering new concepts or engaging in extracurricular activities, I discovered that consistent effort and determination are key to achieving goals.

This lesson has remained with me, driving me to face challenges with resilience and commitment.

The value of community and collaboration was another important lesson. Kabati Primary School emphasized the strength found in working together, whether through group projects or school events. This collaborative spirit highlighted the importance of supporting one another and working towards common objectives, a principle I continue to value in both personal and professional settings.

Furthermore, my time at Kabati nurtured a deep love for learning and curiosity. The diverse subjects and activities sparked my interest in exploring new areas of knowledge, instilling in me a joy for learning that has driven my educational journey.

Lastly, the values of integrity and respect were central to my experience at Kabati. Interactions with teachers, peers, and the community reinforced the importance of honesty and treating others with respect. These values have become fundamental principles in my life, guiding my interactions and decisions.

The lessons learned at Kabati Primary School have played a crucial role in shaping my character and guiding my academic and personal pursuits. The discipline, work ethic, sense of community, love for learning, and values of integrity and respect that I developed during these formative years continue to influence my approach to life and education.

6. EARLY CHURCH LIFE

My early church life was a significant aspect of my upbringing, deeply influencing my values and sense of community. From a young age, I was actively involved in the church, where I learned the importance of faith, service, and fellowship.

Growing up in Kabati, my family was a part of the local church community, which played a central role in our lives. The church was not just a place of worship but also a vibrant center for community activities and support. Attending church services, participating in Sunday school, and joining various church groups were integral parts of my routine. These experiences provided me with a solid foundation in my faith and taught me the importance of living a life guided by spiritual principles.

In the church, I learned about the significance of service and helping others. Whether it was participating in charitable events, supporting community outreach programs, or volunteering for church activities, I was encouraged to contribute positively to those around me. These experiences fostered a deep sense of empathy and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

The church also provided a supportive environment where I could build meaningful relationships and develop a strong sense of belonging. The friendships formed and the guidance received from church leaders and members helped shape my character and instilled in me values of compassion, respect, and integrity.

Early involvement in church life also offered opportunities for leadership and personal growth. I participated in various church roles and activities, which helped me develop skills in organization, communication, and teamwork. These experiences were instrumental in building my confidence and preparing me for future responsibilities.

Overall, my early church life was a cornerstone of my development, influencing my values, character, and sense of community. The lessons learned and the relationships built during these formative years continue to guide me in my personal and spiritual journey.

7. LESSONS LEARNT IN MY EARLY CHURCH LIFE

My early involvement in church life imparted several profound lessons that have significantly influenced my values and approach to life. The most significant

lesson was the importance of faith and spiritual growth. Regular participation in church services and activities deepened my understanding of spiritual principles and emphasized the necessity of nurturing a personal relationship with God. This foundation has been a guiding force, helping me remain focused on my spiritual journey.

Additionally, I learned the value of service and compassion through my church involvement. Engaging in charitable activities and community outreach highlighted the impact of helping others and contributing positively to the community. This lesson instilled a deep sense of empathy and a commitment to making a meaningful difference in the lives of those around me.

The strength of community and fellowship was another crucial lesson. The church community provided a strong sense of belonging and support, reinforcing the importance of mutual support and collaboration. Building relationships with fellow members and participating in group activities taught me the power of working together towards common goals.

Furthermore, my church experiences provided valuable lessons in leadership and responsibility. Taking on various roles and responsibilities within the church helped me develop skills in organization, communication, and decision-making. These experiences built my confidence and prepared me for future challenges.

Finally, church life reinforced the principles of integrity and respect. Interactions with church leaders and members emphasized the importance of honesty and treating others with respect. These values have become fundamental in guiding my personal and professional decisions.

Overall, the lessons learned from my early church life have been instrumental in shaping my character and guiding my actions. The principles of faith, service, community, leadership, and integrity continue to influence my approach to life and reflect the lasting impact of my church experiences.

8. MY JOURNEY AT KABATI SECONDARY SCHOOL (2017-2021)

My secondary school days at Kabati Secondary School, nestled in Laikipia West District, were a formative chapter in my life. Despite the challenges of adjusting to a new academic environment, Kabati offered a blend of rigorous academics and enriching extracurricular activities that played a significant role in shaping my future.

Academics were a central focus during my time at Kabati. The curriculum was demanding, and I was pushed to excel in various subjects, from mathematics and sciences to the humanities. The support and dedication of the teachers were instrumental in my success, providing guidance and encouragement that helped me achieve strong academic results. This period of intense study laid a solid foundation for my further educational pursuits.

Extracurricular activities also played a crucial role in my development. I was actively involved in several school clubs and societies, which helped me build essential skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication. Participating in these activities provided a balance to the academic rigor and allowed me to explore my interests and passions outside the classroom.

One of the highlights of my time at Kabati was the opportunity to take on leadership roles. Whether it was leading a group project or participating in school events, these experiences taught me valuable lessons in responsibility and teamwork. They also helped me develop a strong sense of self-confidence and the ability to inspire and motivate others.

The school's vibrant community was another important aspect of my secondary school experience. The friendships I formed and the support from both peers and teachers created a nurturing environment that contributed to my personal and academic growth. The sense of belonging and camaraderie was a significant part of my journey, making my time at Kabati both enjoyable and rewarding.

Overall, Kabati Secondary School was more than just an academic institution; it was a place where I grew both intellectually and personally. The lessons learned,

skills acquired, and relationships built during these years continue to influence my life, reminding me of the importance of hard work, leadership, and community.

9. LESSONS LEARNT IN MY HIGH SCHOOL LIFE

My high school years at Kabati Secondary School were rich with lessons that have profoundly influenced my personal and academic growth. The experience taught me the critical value of hard work and perseverance, as the demanding curriculum required a dedicated effort to overcome various challenges. Effective time management became essential as I balanced academics, extracurricular activities, and personal responsibilities, honing my ability to prioritize and achieve a well-rounded approach to my commitments. Leadership and teamwork were also central to my high school experience. Taking on leadership roles and working collaboratively in group projects underscored the importance of guiding others, motivating peers, and achieving collective goals. Additionally, navigating the pressures and dynamics of high school fostered resilience and adaptability, teaching me to handle setbacks with grace and remain flexible in the face of change. The strong relationships I built with peers and teachers provided a sense of community and support, emphasizing the value of maintaining meaningful connections. Furthermore, high school was a period of significant personal growth and self-discovery, helping me understand my strengths, interests, and aspirations.

10. KIKUYU CULTURE

a. Akikuyu food culture

Kikuyu food culture is deeply rooted in the community's agricultural heritage and reflects a profound connection to the land. Central to Kikuyu cuisine is maize, which is commonly prepared as ugali, a dense, dough-like porridge that serves as a staple food. Ugali is a versatile accompaniment that pairs well with a variety of dishes, including vegetables, meats, and stews, making it a fundamental part of the Kikuyu diet. Another traditional dish is irio, a nourishing blend of mashed potatoes, maize, and green vegetables such as peas or spinach. Irio is celebrated for its rich flavor and nutritional benefits and is often served alongside meat or stew.

Vegetables and legumes also hold a significant place in Kikuyu cuisine. Greens such as kales (sukuma wiki), spinach, and cabbage are commonly used in everyday meals, typically prepared as simple sautéed dishes or in stews. Beans and lentils are also staple foods, often cooked into flavorful stews that complement the maize-based staples and provide a hearty source of protein.

Meat is an important part of Kikuyu food culture, with beef, goat, and chicken frequently featured in meals. Meat is often prepared in stews or roasted, with nyama choma (roasted meat) being particularly popular during social gatherings and celebrations. The communal aspect of eating, especially with meat, highlights the significance of sharing and togetherness in Kikuyu traditions.

Dairy products, especially milk, are commonly consumed in Kikuyu households. Fresh milk is a regular part of the diet, while mursik, a traditional fermented milk, is also enjoyed. Mursik is made by fermenting milk in a gourd with herbs, and it often accompanies meals or is served during special ceremonies.

Traditional Kikuyu cooking methods emphasize simplicity and natural flavors, with techniques such as boiling, steaming, and roasting being prevalent. These methods not only preserve the nutritional value of the ingredients but also maintain the authenticity of the dishes. Meals are typically shared communally, reinforcing the Kikuyu values of family and community.

Food also plays a central role in Kikuyu ceremonies and celebrations. During significant events such as weddings and initiation rites, elaborate meals are prepared to honor guests and mark the occasion. Special dishes are made to reflect the importance of these events and to bring the community together in celebration.

b. Akikuyu marriage tradition

Kikuyu marriage traditions are deeply rooted in cultural practices and community values, reflecting a rich heritage that emphasizes family, respect, and social unity. The process of marriage in Kikuyu culture traditionally involves several key stages, each steeped in symbolism and significance.

The journey toward marriage begins with a formal proposal, known as kuhura. When a young man is interested in marrying a woman, he and his family will approach the woman's family to seek approval. This initial step is accompanied by the exchange of gifts, known as ngurario, which symbolizes respect and serious intent. The negotiations are conducted with great care, as they set the tone for the relationship between the two families.

Following the approval, the traditional marriage ceremony, or ngwacio, is planned. This ceremony is a significant event that involves various rituals and customs. One of the central elements of the ceremony is the wedding feast, where both families come together to celebrate the union. Traditional foods and drinks are prepared, and the event is marked by songs, dances, and prayers that honor the couple and seek blessings for their future together.

A key aspect of Kikuyu marriage is the payment of bride price, or ruracio. This is a customary practice where the groom's family presents gifts, often including livestock, money, or other valuables, to the bride's family. The bride price is seen as a token of appreciation and respect for the bride's family and is an integral part of cementing the marital bond.

Another important tradition is the involvement of elders, who play a crucial role in guiding and blessing the marriage. Elders are respected figures in Kikuyu society, and their participation in the marriage ceremony signifies the importance of wisdom and communal support in the union. Their blessings are considered essential for ensuring a harmonious and prosperous marriage.

After the marriage ceremony, the couple begins their new life together, often with the support of both families. The transition into married life is marked by various customs and rituals, which may include moving into the groom's homestead or establishing a new home. The couple is expected to adhere to

cultural norms and responsibilities, contributing to the broader family and community life.

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c. Akikuyu medical culture

Kikuyu medical culture is a fascinating blend of traditional practices and beliefs that reflect the community's deep connection to their environment and spiritual world. Traditionally, the Kikuyu people relied heavily on herbal medicine and natural remedies to treat various ailments and maintain health. This reliance on nature is rooted in their extensive knowledge of local plants and herbs, which are believed to possess healing properties.

Herbalists, known as ngoma or mūtumia, are esteemed members of the Kikuyu community. They play a crucial role in diagnosing and treating illnesses using a range of medicinal plants. These herbalists are trained through apprenticeship and possess a deep understanding of the properties and uses of various herbs. Remedies are often prepared in the form of teas, infusions, or poultices, and are used to address both physical and spiritual ailments.

In addition to herbal medicine, traditional Kikuyu healing practices include various rituals and ceremonies designed to restore balance and harmony. These practices are based on the belief that illnesses can be caused by spiritual disturbances or ancestral displeasure. Healing rituals might involve offerings, prayers, and sacrifices to appease the spirits and seek their intervention in restoring health. Elders and spiritual leaders often conduct these ceremonies, emphasizing the importance of spiritual well-being alongside physical health.

Community-based health practices are also integral to Kikuyu medical culture. Traditional healers and community members work together to care for the sick, and there is a strong emphasis on communal support and solidarity. The role of the family and community in health care underscores the Kikuyu value of collective responsibility and support.

Despite the strong tradition of herbal medicine, the Kikuyu people have increasingly integrated modern medical practices into their health care approach. With advancements in medical technology and increased access to formal health services, there is a growing recognition of the benefits of combining traditional and modern medicine. This integration allows for a more comprehensive approach to health care, where traditional remedies are used alongside conventional treatments to address a wide range of health issues.

Overall, Kikuyu medical culture illustrates a rich tapestry of traditional knowledge and practices that highlight the community's deep respect for nature and spirituality. The blend of herbal remedies, spiritual healing, and modern medical practices reflects the Kikuyu people's adaptability and commitment to maintaining their cultural heritage while embracing new advancements in health care.

d. Akikuyu circumcision traditions

Kikuyu circumcision traditions are deeply rooted in the cultural and social fabric of the Kikuyu community, representing a significant rite of passage that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. This ritual, known as *ngurario*, is a pivotal event in Kikuyu society and is celebrated with a blend of cultural ceremonies and communal participation.

Circumcision among the Kikuyu is traditionally performed for both boys and girls, although the practices and rituals differ between the genders. For boys, circumcision is a major rite of passage that signifies their entry into manhood. The procedure is usually conducted during a specific time of year, often associated with the cultural calendar or particular seasons. Prior to the circumcision, extensive preparations are made, including consultations with elders, community meetings, and the selection of traditional healers or practitioners who will perform the ceremony.

The circumcision ceremony itself is accompanied by various rituals and customs. Boys undergoing circumcision are often given special attire and are celebrated with traditional songs, dances, and feasts. The procedure is carried out with great solemnity and is seen as a means of instilling bravery, discipline, and a sense of responsibility in the initiates. After the circumcision, the boys enter a period of

seclusion or recovery, during which they are taught important lessons about adulthood, responsibility, and Kikuyu values by elders and mentors.

For girls, circumcision, which is referred to as clitoridectomy or female circumcision, traditionally involved the removal of the clitoris. This practice, however, has been increasingly challenged and criticized due to health risks and human rights concerns. Modern perspectives on female circumcision have shifted, with many Kikuyu communities abandoning this practice in favor of alternative rites of passage that honor the cultural significance of initiation without compromising health or well-being.

Following the circumcision, the initiates are reintegrated into the community with a series of ceremonies and celebrations that reaffirm their new status. These events often include communal feasts, storytelling, and other cultural activities that emphasize the importance of the transition and the values associated with adulthood.

Kikuyu circumcision traditions reflect a deep cultural commitment to rites of passage and the celebration of life stages. While these practices have evolved over time, the core values of community support, cultural continuity, and personal growth remain central to the Kikuyu approach to initiation and adulthood.

e. Akikuyu social life

Kikuyu social life is a vibrant tapestry woven from deep-rooted traditions, communal values, and a strong sense of community. Central to Kikuyu social life is the concept of ubuntu, which emphasizes the importance of collective well-being, mutual support, and communal living. This value is reflected in various aspects of daily life, from family structures to communal activities and social gatherings.

Family is the cornerstone of Kikuyu social life. Extended families often live close to one another, forming tight-knit communities where responsibilities and resources are shared. The Kikuyu family unit is traditionally organized around the clan system, where individuals are grouped into clans that provide social

support, share responsibilities, and uphold cultural norms. Each clan has its own customs and traditions, contributing to the rich tapestry of Kikuyu social life.

Social gatherings and communal activities play a significant role in Kikuyu culture. Festivals, ceremonies, and communal work projects, such as farming or construction, are opportunities for community members to come together, celebrate, and collaborate. These events often feature traditional music, dance, and storytelling, which are integral to preserving cultural heritage and fostering a sense of unity.

Traditional ceremonies, such as weddings, initiation rites, and funerals, are marked by elaborate rituals and communal participation. These ceremonies are not only personal milestones but also communal events that reinforce social bonds and cultural values. During such occasions, the community gathers to offer support, celebrate, and honor the traditions that define Kikuyu identity.

In addition to communal activities, social life in Kikuyu communities often revolves around shared responsibilities and mutual aid. Neighbors and extended family members work together to support one another, whether through agricultural labor, childcare, or other communal tasks. This spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance is a defining feature of Kikuyu social life and reflects the importance of community solidarity.

Social norms and values are transmitted through storytelling, proverbs, and oral traditions. Elders play a key role in imparting wisdom and cultural values to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of Kikuyu traditions and social practices. These oral traditions are vital for preserving the community's history and fostering a sense of identity and belonging.

11. Positive aspects of Akikuyu culture

Kikuyu culture, rooted in the traditions of the Kikuyu people of Kenya, is rich with values and practices that positively contribute to community cohesion and individual well-being. Central to Kikuyu culture is the strong emphasis on communal living and family ties. The Kikuyu people place a high value on family and extended kinship networks, which provide a robust support system and

foster a sense of belonging and security. Family gatherings and communal activities are integral to maintaining close relationships and ensuring that support is readily available for all members.

Another significant positive aspect of Kikuyu culture is the deep respect for elders and their role as custodians of cultural knowledge. Elders are highly revered for their wisdom and experience, and they play a crucial role in guiding the community and imparting traditional values to younger generations. This respect ensures that cultural heritage is preserved and passed down, maintaining a strong connection to ancestral practices and beliefs.

Kikuyu culture is also characterized by its rich artistic traditions. Traditional music, dance, and crafts are celebrated and performed during various ceremonies and festivals. These artistic expressions not only serve as a means of entertainment but also as a way to preserve and celebrate Kikuyu heritage. Music and dance play a vital role in communal events, bringing people together and reinforcing cultural identity.

The Kikuyu people also have a profound respect for their natural environment, which is reflected in their traditional agricultural practices and land management. Their farming methods are based on sustainable practices that honor and protect the land. This relationship with nature is integral to Kikuyu culture, emphasizing the importance of environmental stewardship and the preservation of natural resources for future generations.

Additionally, Kikuyu culture places a strong emphasis on education and personal development. Traditional values encourage hard work, perseverance, and the pursuit of knowledge. Education is highly valued, and there is a collective effort to support individuals in their academic and professional endeavors, recognizing that personal growth contributes to the betterment of the community.

12. LIFE OUTSIDE CLASS AND CHURCH

Beyond my academic and spiritual pursuits, my life has been deeply enriched by active engagement in community development projects and professional endeavors. From involvement in infrastructure improvements to mentorship

roles, these experiences have shaped my character and contributed to my personal growth.

Community Development Projects: Throughout my journey, I have actively participated in community-driven initiatives aimed at enhancing local infrastructure and fostering community cohesion. One notable involvement has been in road works and the construction of social infrastructure like schools and repairs. Working alongside fellow community members, I learned the value of teamwork, dedication, and the transformative power of collective action. Whether it was repairing roads to improve accessibility or building schools to enhance educational opportunities, these projects instilled in me a sense of civic duty and responsibility towards contributing positively to my community's development.

Transition to the Working World: After completing my secondary education, I transitioned into the working world, where I sought to apply my skills and contribute meaningfully to professional settings. This transition not only exposed me to diverse work environments but also honed my organizational and problem-solving skills. Whether it was through internships, part-time roles, or full-time employment, each experience provided valuable insights into teamwork dynamics, project management, and professional ethics.

Mentorship and Role Modeling: A significant aspect of my life outside class and church has been serving as a mentor and role model to other young people in the community. Drawing from my own experiences and learning journeys, I have been privileged to offer guidance, support, and encouragement to aspiring individuals. Whether through informal mentoring relationships or organized youth programs, I have strived to empower others to realize their potential, set meaningful goals, and navigate challenges with resilience and determination. Being a mentor has not only been a fulfilling endeavor but also a reciprocal learning process that has enriched my understanding of leadership and the power of positive influence.

Building Relationships and Making New Friends: Beyond professional and community roles, I have actively engaged in building meaningful relationships and expanding my social network. Making new friends from diverse

backgrounds has broadened my perspective, exposed me to different cultures, and enriched my personal experiences. These friendships have been nurtured through shared interests, collaborative projects, and mutual support, reinforcing the importance of interpersonal connections in personal and professional life.

In conclusion, my life outside class and church has been characterized by active involvement in community development initiatives, meaningful contributions to the working world, mentorship roles, and the cultivation of friendships. These experiences have not only shaped my personal growth and professional development but also reinforced my commitment to making a positive impact in society. Looking ahead, I am excited about continuing to engage in meaningful endeavors that contribute to community well-being, inspire others through mentorship, and foster enduring friendships that enrich life's journey.

13. LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY

Since October 4, 2021, my journey at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DeKUT) in Nyeri County has been both enriching and transformative. Pursuing a degree in actuarial science has sharpened my analytical and quantitative skills, providing a solid academic foundation for my career aspirations. The vibrant campus life here offers a dynamic blend of rigorous academics and engaging extracurricular activities.

A significant highlight of my time at DeKUT has been my active involvement in GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru Association). Through GEMA, I have participated in numerous activities aimed at uniting students from different communities and fostering a sense of cultural pride. The association organizes a variety of events, such as fun days and hiking trips, which provide a refreshing break from academic routines and strengthen the bonds among members. These activities not only offer recreational opportunities but also reinforce our cultural identity and solidarity.

In addition to recreational activities, GEMA is committed to supporting its members and the broader community. We regularly organize contributions to assist fellow students in need, whether through financial support, academic assistance, or emotional encouragement. Our outreach extends beyond the university, engaging in community service projects in the areas surrounding the campus. These initiatives include cleaning drives, educational outreach programs, and collaborations with local organizations to enhance community welfare. Through these efforts, we aim to give back to the community and demonstrate our values of compassion and service.

Life at DeKUT has also been enriched by making new friends and forming lasting connections. The diverse student body has exposed me to various perspectives and cultures, broadening my understanding and appreciation of different viewpoints. The friendships I have forged here have been a source of support, inspiration, and shared growth, making my university experience both enjoyable and meaningful.

Overall, my time at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology has been a blend of academic rigor, cultural engagement, and community service. Being an active member of GEMA has greatly enriched my university experience, allowing me to connect with fellow students, contribute to the community, and build lasting friendships. As I continue my journey at DeKUT, I am excited about further personal and academic growth and about making a positive impact both within and beyond the university community.

14. Key Values Campus Life at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Has Taught Me

My time at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (DeKUT) has been a formative journey, instilling in me several key values that have shaped my personal and professional development. These values include resilience, community engagement, cultural appreciation, and the importance of lifelong learning.

Resilience: One of the most significant lessons I have learned at DeKUT is resilience. The demanding nature of my actuarial science program has required me to be highly dedicated and persistent. Juggling coursework, projects, and exams has taught me effective time management and how to stay focused under pressure. This resilience extends beyond academics; participating in various extracurricular activities and navigating the challenges of university life has helped me cultivate a strong, adaptable mindset.

Community Engagement: Another crucial value is community engagement. Through my active involvement in GEMA (Gikuyu, Embu, and Meru Association), I have witnessed the impact of contributing to and supporting a community. Organizing events, assisting fellow students, and participating in outreach programs have highlighted the importance of being actively involved in

the community. It has shown me the power of collective action and the positive changes it can bring.

Cultural Appreciation: Being part of GEMA has also deepened my appreciation for my cultural heritage and the diversity around me. Engaging in activities that celebrate our traditions and connecting with students from various backgrounds has reinforced the significance of cultural identity. At the same time, interacting with a diverse student body has taught me to value and respect different cultures and perspectives. This cultural appreciation is vital in today's globalized world, where understanding and respecting diversity fosters harmonious relationships.

Lifelong Learning: Campus life at DeKUT has emphasized the value of lifelong learning. The academic environment, characterized by curiosity and intellectual rigor, has encouraged me to continually seek knowledge and improve my skills. The evolving nature of actuarial science, with its developing theories and applications, exemplifies the need for ongoing education. Moreover, my involvement in various activities and associations has provided numerous informal learning opportunities, teaching me practical skills and life lessons beyond the classroom.

15. Life as a comrade amidst challenges

Life as a comrade at the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology is a journey filled with both enriching experiences and significant challenges. One of the most pressing issues I face is financial constraints, which permeate various aspects of daily life and require constant adaptation and resilience.

Financial Constraints: Financial difficulties are a common struggle for many university students, myself included. The pressure of delayed payments and limited funds often leads to a constant juggling act to make ends meet. Paying rent is a primary concern, and delays in receiving money from home or bursaries often result in tense negotiations with landlords. The anxiety of potentially being evicted due to late rent payments is a recurring stressor. Additionally, these financial constraints sometimes mean having to skip meals or rely on the generosity of friends. This harsh reality forces me to carefully budget every shilling, prioritizing essential expenses over personal comfort.

Organizing Parties: Despite these challenges, moments of joy and camaraderie are vital to maintaining a balanced and fulfilling life. Organizing birthday parties and other social gatherings with friends is a cherished way to break the monotony and stress of academic life. These events, while modest, provide a sense of community and support. Pooling resources and creativity becomes essential, often resulting in memorable, low-cost celebrations that strengthen bonds and provide much-needed relief from daily pressures.

Shifting Residences: Another significant challenge is the instability of housing. Due to the stigma and fear some landlords have about renting to university students, I have had to shift residences multiple times. This transient lifestyle is not just disruptive but also emotionally taxing. Constantly moving from one place to another in search of a more accommodating landlord or better living conditions adds to the overall stress. The stigma surrounding university students as noisy or troublesome tenants often leads to prejudiced treatment, making it difficult to find stable and welcoming housing.

Living Among Ordinary Citizens: Living off-campus, embedded within communities of ordinary citizens, presents a unique dynamic. While it offers a chance to integrate more fully into the broader society and escape the bubble of campus life, it also means navigating complex social interactions. The misconceptions and sometimes outright hostility from some community members towards students can be challenging. However, it also provides opportunities to build relationships with neighbors who are understanding and supportive, helping to bridge the gap between students and the local community.

Life as a comrade at the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, surrounded by financial constraints and housing instability, requires resilience and resourcefulness. The struggle to manage limited funds, the constant search for stable housing, and the efforts to maintain social connections through organized parties all paint a picture of a challenging but vibrant student life. Despite these hurdles, the sense of community and the shared experiences with fellow students create a support network that helps navigate these difficulties. This life, though fraught with challenges, also fosters growth, adaptability, and a deep appreciation for the small joys and victories that punctuate the journey.

17. Personal Projects and Interests

Beyond my professional and academic pursuits, I am passionate about several hobbies and interests that provide relaxation and inspiration.

Watching Documentaries: One of my favorite pastimes is watching documentaries. I enjoy films covering a wide range of topics, from natural history and science to social issues and biographies. These documentaries offer new perspectives and a deeper understanding of the world, inspiring me to explore new ideas and think critically about complex issues.

Nature Walks: Nature walks are another rejuvenating activity for me. Spending time outdoors, whether hiking in the forests of Nyeri or exploring the savannas, helps me disconnect from the everyday hustle and appreciate the beauty and tranquility of the natural world. These walks also offer a chance for reflection and creative thinking, often leading to new ideas and insights for my professional projects. They remind me of the importance of environmental preservation and the interconnectedness of all living things.

Reading: Reading is a passion that has significantly contributed to both my personal and professional growth. I enjoy a variety of genres, including fiction, non-fiction, and scientific literature. Books on data science, statistics, and mathematics have been particularly influential, shaping my understanding of these fields. Staying updated with the latest advancements and case studies helps me apply cutting-edge techniques and methodologies in my work, keeping my skills and knowledge current.

These activities not only provide me with relaxation and enjoyment but also play a crucial role in fostering my creativity, expanding my knowledge, and enhancing my overall well-being.

18. Conclusion

As I reflect on my journey, I am reminded of the importance of perseverance, hard work, and continuous learning. My autobiography is a testament to the power of self-discovery and growth, and I hope that it will inspire others to pursue their passions and interests.