

ASEF had an inspiring interview with our graduates now studying in the United States of America

How can you describe yourself?

Ntakirutimana Elie: I am known for my unwavering spirit, empathy, and resilience. In the face of adversity, I love demonstrating unshakable determination and a relentless pursuit of self-improvement. My defining trait is my deep desire to make a difference, with dreams rooted in altruism and a commitment to transforming the lives of the vulnerable.

Nkurunziza Ghad: Growing up as the firstborn, I grew up in a low-income family of two parents and four siblings in the rural area part of Rwanda, Burera-Butaro. Looking at myself, risk-taking, persistence and a growth mindset define the truest essence of my personality.



Nkurunziza Ghad - Burera Graduate

Do you mind sharing with us your high school background with ASEF?

Elie: I have been supported by ASEF in my advanced level from 2019 to 2022. I began my academic pursuits at GS Kivumu, a lesser-known public school, during my ordinary-level studies. However, a turning point came when I achieved exceptional results at the district level in Kamonyi, leading me to apply to ASEF, which subsequently became the catalyst for my dreams. ASEF's support enabled me to enroll at the prestigious GSO Butare. There, I seized every opportunity, excelling in competitions like the Wavumbuzi Entrepreneurship Challenge, where I secured first place in Water Quest at a national level. Furthermore, I proudly ranked fifth in General Education countrywide during the Advanced Level National Examinations, a testament to my dedication and growth.

Ghad: 2016 is when I joined E.S Runaba in O' level. Confused like any other senior 1 student, I had no clear path of my future ambitions. When I went to classes, my English was questionable, my critical thinking skills were still sleeping, and my goal-setting skills were still young. However, I remember the day I had a conversation with my physics teacher, that's when I realized that the future holds something for me and what I needed only was sacrificing my time and spending it on books and classes.

Going to an advanced level, the vision was bigger. With the primary intention of seeing the plane with my eyes, I decided to choose ES. KANOMBE/EFOTEC over any other school countrywide. Honestly speaking, no specific thing I knew about EFOTEC except that it was near the Kigali International Airport.



Ntakirutimana Elie - Rulindo Graduate

Which university are you attending and how did you find it?

Ghad: In the midst of Covid-19, God revealed the bride to my destiny; Isomo Academy. Without hesitation, I applied and fortunately was accepted to join the cohort of 120 brilliant students from all over the country. Being in ISOMO Academy opened my eyes to the world outside the books and classrooms, and taught me the importance of looking around and giving a hand to the needy. From Isomo, that's where I learned that nothing is impossible; just it requires a trial and denies mediocrity.

Beyond community engagement and class reading, applying for college was the next. This was the most challenging and toughest journey of my education career. I applied to 20 colleges in the US, but the results were heartbreaking. After 19 depressing moments of rejection, I was accepted into Wesleyan University and this proves that multiple failures are not the end of someone's life. Today, I'm in college, but whenever I look back to my past, the obstacles on my way to this milestone were uncountable, but persistence determination, and God's blessing only guaranteed me victory.

Elie: I'm currently pursuing my Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Sciences at Cornell University, an esteemed Ivy League institution in New York, US. After completing Senior 5, I had the opportunity to join Isomo Academy, an English immersion program affiliated with Bridge2Rwanda. My college counselors at Bridge2Rwanda are the ones who told me to apply to Cornell. They played a pivotal role in my college application process, assisting me in selecting schools, crafting essays, and equipping me with essential information about college life. Their support has been instrumental in my educational journey

Any advice to ASEF students who love to join such special university?

Ghad: Beautiful ASEF's daughters and sons, remember that it's not too late to pursue your dreams. Build a strong heart to stand the rejections and failures, but remember that only time heals. Get rid of mediocrity, and always read books; that's how you fight self-supported ignorance. The world has many opportunities, but remember opportunities will never chase you; go chase them. Find something you're better at, free yourself, and hunt for excellence in it. Your teachers, classmates, Deans of studies, parents, neighbors, and friends, everyone can be a bridge to your success; respect and learn from them. But remember, people are different; don't surround yourself with people who don't value your dreams—they can make you lose track of the final point. More importantly, success is always worked for, so stay motivated, work a bit harder, and maintain excellent discipline.



Elie: Seeking admission to a prestigious university requires more than good grades; it necessitates a foundation of values and unwavering commitment. The advice is straightforward: First, know that you went to study not to school, "view your education as an opportunity, work diligently, dream ambitiously, stay open-minded, and seek opportunities. Understand that challenges are inevitable on the path to such universities, but after every setback, there's a chance for success. Cultivate curiosity, as it fuels the quest for knowledge, and embrace failures as valuable lessons. In essence, combine academic excellence with resilience, ambition, curiosity, and a growth mindset to reach your goals. Never give up!

