**MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY**

# **Introduction**

As I sit down to pen down the narrative of my life, I am flooded with memories of my journey that has brought me to where I am today. Born into a world filled with wonder and possibilities, I, Solomon Onyango Ndeda, am a twenty three-year-old university student from a small town Homabay in the Lakeside region. This autobiography serves as a testimony to the experiences that have shaped me into the person I am today, fueled by aspirations and dreams that have guided me through the highs and lows of life.

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# **Early Childhood**

My earliest memories are painted with the vibrant hues of joy and innocence that only childhood can bring .I was born into a family of five in the lush, green highlands of Kericho County, Kenya. Growing up in a close-knit family, I learned the values of hard work, perseverance, and the importance of family bonds. These early lessons have stayed with me throughout my life and have been fundamental in shaping the person I am today.

The youngest of three siblings, I was fortunate to have a older brother and sister, David and Irene, who were not just protective but also my partners in crime. Irene, the eldest, was the epitome of intelligence and wit, always there to challenge me to think beyond the obvious. David, two years my senior, was the adventurous spirit in our family, ready to explore every nook and cranny of our neighborhood with me in tow. Together, we formed a tight-knit trio, bound by blood and an unspoken promise to always have each other’s backs.

As a young child, my days were filled with laughter and play, the backyard of our home serving as the canvas for our grand adventures. From climbing trees to building forts out of cardboard boxes, every moment was a new opportunity to explore the world around us and unleash our creativity. Our parents always encouraged us to embrace our individual interests and talents, fostering an environment of love and acceptance that laid the foundation for the strong family bond we shared.

Growing up in a quaint little house on the outskirts of town, I was blessed with the love and support of my loving parents, Gladys and Joseph. My father, a hardworking electrician, would regale me with stories of his adventures in fixing all kinds of electrical puzzles, instilling in me a sense of curiosity and problem-solving from a young age. My mother, a dedicatedschoolteacher, would nurture my love for learning, spending countless hours poring over picture books and teaching me the magic of words and imaginationMy parents, Joseph and Gladys Ndeda, along with my siblings, Irene and David, made sure that I always felt cherished and supported. My older sister Irene and brother David, in particular, played crucial roles in my upbringing. Irene, the first born, was like a second mother to me, guiding and nurturing me through life's early challenges. David, my older brother, was my first friend and partner in many childhood adventures. The close bond we shared as siblings was a source of strength and comfort, especially during the tough times that lay ahead.

Kericho is predominantly inhabited by the Kalenjin community, and this cultural backdrop played a significant role in my upbringing. Despite being born into the Luo community, my first language was Swahili, which served as a bridge between different ethnic groups in our multicultural environment.

Living in Kericho was a unique experience that shaped my early years in profound ways. My parents worked in the county, which was why our family resided there. This setting allowed me to grow up in a diverse community, surrounded by Kalenjin traditions and language. Attending local schools, I was immersed in an environment where most of my classmates were Kalenjin. This exposure to their culture and language from an early age was both enriching and eye-opening.

Before joining Chemogo Primary School, I began my education at a local early childhood school. This period was marked by a blend of curiosity and exploration. The early childhood school was a microcosm of the broader Kericho community, with children from various ethnic backgrounds learning and playing together. This diverse environment fostered a sense of inclusivity and respect for different cultures.

At Chemogo Primary School, my initial academic performance was modest. The lower primary years were challenging as I navigated the complexities of a formal education system. However, the supportive environment created by my teachers and peers encouraged me to persevere. My parents, Joseph and Gladys, were my pillars of strength, constantly motivating me to do my best.

Living in a predominantly Kalenjin area allowed me to absorb much of their culture and language. I learned to appreciate the rich traditions, dances, and ceremonies that were integral to the Kalenjin way of life. The community's emphasis on unity, respect for elders, and the importance of communal activities left a lasting impression on me. I also picked up the Kalenjin language, which became a valuable skill in my interactions with friends and neighbors.

As I moved into higher primary, my academic performance began to improve. The turning point came in Class 5 when a teacher named Mr. Otieno recognized my potential and encouraged me to focus more on my studies. His belief in me sparked a determination to succeed, and I began to excel, consistently ranking among the top students in my class. My dedication paid off when I passed my Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations with high marks.

Despite my excellent performance, my dream of joining Mang'u High School, a prestigious national high school, was dashed due to financial constraints. My parents, Joseph and Gladys, could not afford the fees required for me to attend. Instead, I joined Riambase Secondary School, a district-level high school. This was a significant shift, but I was determined to make the best of the situation.

As I entered my adolescent years, the idyllic days of childhood began to give way to the complexities of teenage life. The carefree innocence was replaced with a growing sense of independence and self-discovery, paving the way for new experiences and challenges that would shape my teenage years. My parents, ever supportive and understanding, navigated this transition with patience and wisdom, guiding me through the tumultuous waters of adolescence with unwavering love and guidance.

# **Secondary School**

At Riambase, I strove to excel academically. I immersed myself in my studies, always aiming to be among the best students. My hard work and perseverance paid off as I consistently emerged as one of the top performers in my school. The environment at Riambase, though different from what I had envisioned at Mang'u, provided me with opportunities to grow, both academically and personally.

During my time at Riambase, I met people from different parts of the country, which broadened my perspective and fueled my desire to travel and learn about different communities. I joined the science club, where I was first introduced to technology and programming. Although I had little knowledge and less interest at the time, this experience planted the seeds of curiosity. I met new people and learned a lot about different cultures from all over the country, further enhancing my understanding and appreciation of Kenya's diversity.

One of the highlights of my secondary school years was learning the local Kisii language. My journey as a high schooler in Kisii County enabled me to learn and speak Kisii fluently, enriching my linguistic skills and allowing me to connect more deeply with the local community.

My interest in programming and computer science was significantly piqued after attending a science club event in Nairobi. This event featured a variety of project presentations, including those from university students who showcased their programming skills and projects. Seeing how these students brought their ideas to life through programming ignited a strong curiosity in me. I realized the potential of technology to solve real-world problems and improve lives, and I became determined to learn more about computer science and programming.

As I approached the pivotal juncture of choosing a path for my future, the unwavering support of my family and the lessons learned from my formative years served as guiding beacons, illuminating the way forward. With a heart full of dreams and a mind brimming with possibilities, I set my sights on the next chapter of my life – the pursuit of higher education at a university that would serve as the canvas for my aspirations and ambitions.

The prospect of university filled me with a mix of excitement and trepidation, as I prepared to embark on a new chapter of my life filled with uncertainty and possibilities. The thought of leaving behind the familiar comforts of home was both daunting and exhilarating, as I grappled with the bittersweet emotions of growth and change. However, the unwavering belief instilled in me by my family and the lessons learned from my upbringing gave me the courage to take the leap into the unknown, armed with the resilience and determination needed to navigate the challenges that lay ahead.

# **Impact of the 2007 Post-Election Violence**

The year 2007 brought a significant and heartbreaking change to my life. At the time, I was young and didn't fully understand the complexities of the political landscape, but I could feel the drastic change in our lives. The post-election violence that erupted across Kenya deeply affected my family and me. Our once peaceful life in Kericho was shattered as ethnic tensions escalated. My parents, who were business people, lost everything during this period—our home, our belongings, and our sense of security were all taken from us. The violence forced us to flee, seeking refuge with relatives in safer areas.

This upheaval was a turning point in my life. The loss and displacement we experienced instilled in me a resilience and determination that I carry with me to this day. I saw firsthand the fragility of stability and the impact of political turmoil on ordinary lives. Despite the hardships, my parents remained steadfast in their support, emphasizing the importance of education as a means to rebuild and secure a better future.

The challenges we faced during this period strengthened my resolve to succeed. I continued to excel in my studies at Riambase Secondary School, finding solace and purpose in my academic pursuits. The support of my family and the encouragement of my teachers kept me focused on my goals. The adversity we faced became a driving force, pushing me to work harder and to strive for excellence in everything I did.