



Enactus UCT
University of Cape Town
Simphiwe.nyathikazi@gmail.com
Website: enactuscapetown.wixsite.com

To The Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee,
South Parks Road, Oxford OX1, 3RG,
United Kingdom

RE: Recommendation Letter for Willie Ng'ang'a Macharia

It is both an honour and a privilege to attest to the character, impact and leadership of Willie Macharia whom I have known for the last 4 years. I also had the privilege of serving with Willie in the executive committee of Enactus UCT for the 2018-2019 academic year. Enactus is an internationally recognised, student-led organisation which enables entrepreneurial action through community engagement. Enactus members use entrepreneurship and innovation to create sustainable business models which positively impact the planet, people and prosperity. The society seeks to bring significant change to the communities we work in.

It is worth noting that the UCT Chapter of this organisation was non-existent before and myself, Willie Macharia and another student saw the opportunity, the need and did the work necessary to create a space for social entrepreneurship in the best University in the continent.

Prior to joining Enactus, Willie was looking for a student organisation where he could use his skills to give back to the society. Through a conversation with him, I discovered Willie had been disturbed by what he saw when he first arrived in Cape Town. Through a ride from the Cape Town airport to university, Willie observed many shacks and slums that were built along the road while other areas had good houses and facilities. This made him discover that there existed huge social inequality in Cape Town and he was wondering how he could help to bridge the gap of inequality by using his skills to give back to society. Slowly, through a friend, he discovered that Enactus was the best avenue he could pursue his passion. This was the motivation behind his efforts of starting the chapter of the organization in the University of Cape Town.

In 2018, Cape Town was experiencing a water crisis and day zero had been announced. Together with other Enactus members, Willie was able to develop a project called Imvotho project whose aim was to create fog catchers in humid areas of Cape Town to collect water. The project also involved working with various NGOs in Cape Town to construct cheap concrete water tanks in some informal settlements to catch stormwater. During his tenure as the society treasurer, the society managed to construct two water tanks in a township called ERF81 Tamboerskloof Cape Town after securing funding from the FORD Foundation. The impact of the project was after completion of the project, more than 20 households got access to water and they could also use the water to water their gardens which was the source of their livelihood. Willie also represented the University at the 2018 Enactus National

competition where the university won three awards.

The most remarkable act that Willie did was to serve on the Enactus executive committee in two years in a row where even after I left Enactus as the President he continued to be the treasurer. Speaking to him why he did it he stated he had not yet achieved his vision in Enactus which was to mentor other Enactus members to take over the society leadership and also to help the society hold various fundraising. The fundarssing was to raise funds for the projects. In 2019, he led the Enactus team to one of the Enactus first fundraising events where he worked together with the fundraising committee to raise more than R12K for the society. Furthermore, in 2019-2020 society elections, he had managed to mentor his treasury subcommittee which took over from him. This by itself shows that Willie is a goal getter.

During his tenure, Willie managed to streamline the society's financial operations where he worked tirelessly to develop society financial spending policy to ensure that the society funds were being handled appropriately. Whenever there was a financial task that needed to be done, Willie never gave an excuse of being busy with other tasks as he purposefully took his responsibilities with a lot of commitment. This shows that Willie is a team player who always makes sure that he completes his tasks beyond expectations.

As an individual, I have been able to observe his ever-evolving ability to learn, listen and engage. He is a level headed student and individual, reliable and with a desire to promote student culture and life on campus. This is evident since he is a mentor in his department (Computer Science) where in the 2019 academic year, he declined a paid offer to become a Computer Science tutor and chose to become a Computer science mentor to help first year students in the Computer science department settle in the University. During the Mid-year vacation, he encouraged many students to apply for the student leadership program hosted by the Department of Student Affairs since his experience with the student leadership program in 2017 was amazing and he wanted other students to experience the same. Willie also recognizes and appreciates diversity that exists amongst students as it is evident in 2019 October, where there was a bus strike and that meant some students could not come to school and there was a class exercise for INF2009F, a course which Willie was a class rep. Willie quickly notified the lecturer that some students could not come to school due to the taxi strike and requested the lecturer to schedule a makeup exercise for the students. This to me showed that Willie is a proactive leader and he understands the people he leads.

Through his involvement in student leadership and community outreach projects, Willie was awarded the Student Leadership Excellence award in 2019 by the University of Cape Town. The award was presented to him by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in charge of Academics who also applauded his efforts in organising mental health workshops while he was in Kenya for December holidays.

An exceptional leader, who has taken different roles of leadership and community projects, I feel that he is a potential candidate for the Rhodes Scholarship. I believe that the scholarship will continue to empower him and motivate him to continue impacting society.

Sincerely yours,



Simphiwe Nyathikazi,

(2018-2019) Enactus University of Cape Town President.