

## MY PERSONAL STORY

My name is Teresia Kanini Mwema, I was born in Kenya at the remote village of Mulango as the forth born in our family. We were living as a family together with our two parents and six children. Life was not easy since both of my parents were unemployed. Our survival depended on the little piece of land which my dad inherited from his mother. Food depended on seasons sometimes the plants did well, and we thanked God for the little food when the season failed us, we had no choice but to work on other people's land cultivating their crops to get food for a single meal.

Things got worse when my dad left home unceremoniously, and he never came back. My mother was left to raise six children alone and she had no source of income. Our last born by the time was a month old and she never knew her dad. I remember her calling every male she came across daddy. I was five when my dad left, and I needed to start schooling. All that I wanted to be when I grew up was a doctor and without schooling it will remain a dream forever. By then, my elder siblings were in lower primary. My mum used to work in a corn field the whole day to raise 2 dollars. We needed food and school fees let alone clothes. To manage all the basic needs, we had to survive with porridge and boiled corn every day. We had to skip breakfast and lunch meals in order to have supper. We took one meal per day and sometimes we had zero meals for a day or two.

I remember I used to survive with two clothes, one dress which was yellow in color, but it was difficult to recognize since it was full of patches of different colors. My best dress was my uniform and I could put it on even when going to church on Sunday. I had no shoes. There was no water near our home, so we had to walk seven miles to fetch water every morning at five before going to school. At the age of 6, I could carry 20 liters can of water every day before going to school. Sometimes we received donations of books and school fees from well-wishers though it was occasionally. I managed to go through my primary school despite being faced with a lot of challenges. Walking 10 miles daily, bare footed with a hungry stomach, old and torn uniform for 8 years. I never put on any new clothes since I only afforded a secondhand dress.

When I joined high school, life became tougher. Luckily my neighbor donated her old uniform and shoes and those were the first shoes in my life. I could miss school for somedays due to lack of school fees. During holidays I would work in a corn field and save the 2 dollars daily and that's how I raised my fees. Despite my difficulties I was a multi-talented student. I had responsibilities at school as the school captain and Christian union leader. So, I had to handle school responsibilities, class work, homework, and fetch water in the morning before going to school. I also joined the Science Club where I got exposed to invention competitions. I met my friend Hannah with whom we invented the Green Energy which involves generation of electricity from plant juice and cow urine. The reason we took up this issue was because we come from an area with no electricity and have struggled for many years to do our homework using light from a fire or smoky paraffin lamps. We won Nationally in Kenya in the Chemistry category. Due to our groundbreaking achievements, our teacher and mentor Peter Mokaya Tabichi applied for and won The Varkey foundation \$1 Million Global Teacher prize for 2019.

Currently, I am in the United States since we were invited to present our project in Chattanooga at the Fab Institute.

I am glad that God has made it possible for me to come here. What I used to encourage myself is that to be born in a poor family was by fate, but to make my tomorrow better is by choice. So, I had to make a choice that I want the best, so I had to do my best. To make my dreams of being a doctor to come true one day. I sat for my national examinations last year and despite my numerous challenges and setback, I was the leading student in my school with a B+. I performed well and I can now appreciate all the hardships I have gone through for they have taught me resilience, patience and hard work eventually will pay off. I look forward to joining college but raising the college fee is a burden to me that I cannot be able to handle. I have no source of income and am pleading to anyone who may be willing to assist me with this to lend a hand since am at the end of the tunnel right now. I don't know what to do. I don't know where to start but I really need to study and pursue my dreams and expand my research in the field of medicine. I believe I was not born to lose but to win. I would like to proceed with my education at least to reduce the difficulties that have befallen my life.

If I happen to be accepted and admitted to a U.S. College and complete my nursing course, I would like to support my parents, family and my community once employed. I would also use the Nursing skills to serve people my village, region and the nation of Kenya to improve their lives through providing better health services. Preferably, my desire is to return to my country and further my research in electric generation as I undertake my nursing responsibilities in order to offer both economical and health remedies to my society. In addition, I plan to establish a nonprofit missionary health care organization in order to assist the sick poor people who can not afford hospital costs for medical attention. I want to be a shining example in my community, a global ambassador for my college by using my education and skills passionately serve people with the grace of God.

Lastly, for the 14 years that I have schooled despite a lot of challenges, I have overcome and made my Community proud. Through my green energy invention and winning the Kenya National Science fair, I have been able to offer an alternative source of electricity to the poor people in my society who cannot afford the cost of electricity by providing a remedy in lighting problems. This has led to an improvement in the academic performance of students. Also, our prize-winning invention contributed a lot to our teacher's Global Teacher prize triumph. As a result, this gave worldwide exposure to our village and school as we have hosted many International media outlets who came to see our invention. Finally, my most proud achievement is that I emerged as the Top Student/Valedictorian of the 2018 graduating class. It was also a great honor for me designated Student leader and Christian Club leader in my School; Through God's grace, I was able to impact many students to live in harmony with Christian teachings through my example in academics and spirituality.