

IN MY OWN WORDS

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I HAVE COME A LONG WAY

My name is Adonyo Emmanuel, I am a MasterCard Foundation Scholar at UCT pursuing honours in biomedical sciences with specialization in Bioinformatics. My life story is quite unique and sometimes I feel embarrassed talking about it. Well, I was born in a remote village in the Northern part of Uganda. With eighteen members in our polygamous household, my parents were typically peasants who subsisted on garden-to-mouth hand farming, with no history of basic education in my ancestry. As a village child, I always wondered how our family might get out of this stricken poverty state. For a long time there seemed to be no answer for my question, until one day I saw a tractor which was roving through the bushy small roads used by the grazing animals near our home. It was collecting fresh foods to take to Lira town which was a renown urban town among my village mates. I immediately ran home to ask my mother what that thing was and she told me that it was a motor vehicle (tractor) owned by very few rich people who are educated and are able to afford living in Lira town.



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Being a tyke, I inquired if I too could be educated and be able to afford the moving vehicle as well, but she told me that in my lineage no one had ever been to University and besides we were very poor. God willing, I secured a scholarship in 2006 for my secondary education and later joined University on another scholarship.

I do envision my efforts as one of the commitments to our community and its development through academic transformation for the underprivileged families. As a former as well as a current beneficiary, MasterCard Foundation Scholars Programme(MCFSP) at the University of Cape Town(UCT) of societal commitments to transform the lives of others; I firmly believe that the benefits of education especially to transform rural communities far eclipses the shortcomings.

During our recent engagement with the MasterCard Foundation where scholars met with program staffs, we were encouraged to talk about ourselves which enabled me to open up about some parts of my hidden life story that I thought I would never talk about. Allow me to share a glimpse of my true story. In 2004, I dropped out of secondary school just in senior two due to lack of school fees. Dejected, I felt utterly defeated at that moment. The hopelessness forced me to join the military just at the age of 16. It was a common practice in my village for young boys to join the army or rebel activities once they felt they had failed in school. Fortunately, my father sent a message to me that I had secured the LDF scholarships which led me to my escape from the military barracks. I got back to school and graduated in 2015. Today, I feel so proud that I am part of the efforts of young African forces that are effecting changes in our communities.

Having undergone leadership training at YALI leadership center in East Africa, a flagship of Barack Obama's efforts to train young Africa leaders.

I have immersed myself in series of the alumni chapter programme events by actively engaging in many transformation processes such as health camps where we mobilize communities for blood donations, testing and screening of diseases such as HIV, eye and blood pressure checkups and recommending patients to a nearby health facility. As well as nutrition camps where we teach parents on healthy diets for their family. Most importantly, I am an active member of Lango Development Forum; a charity organization whose objective is to ensure that students who are economically impoverished but academically talented receive bursaries and complete secondary education. Through our individual yearly subscriptions and fundraising events, we have been able to consistently maintain at least 20 students on our bursary scheme.

Most of our attention is on girl child education because our communities haven't appreciated the importance of educating a girl child other than just for teenage marriages. Since we have only meager resource, we are unable to pay for university tuitions, as such, we always seek to partner with likeminded individuals and organization to take up our students, as many of them secure government scholarships.

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We have successfully collaborated with Engineer Herbert Akora Foundation. They are sponsoring a girl child pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Surveying and Geomatics Engineering at Makerere University. Within the organization, I am a member of the fundraising committee and assistant treasury to the Forum. My role is to organize events to mobilize funds to send children to secondary schools. I also deliver career guidance to schools and regularly participates in the mentorship of our bursary students. Just before I left for my studies at UCT under MCFSP, I was the assistant treasurer who was being mentored to manage the finances of the forum.

In conclusion, the LDF boasts of its relentless efforts where we have sponsored over 60 needy students and many have since graduated to become Engineers, Doctors, Agriculturalists, business men/women among other professions. Professionally, I volunteered for 6 months with war-child Holland - Uganda as an ICT Trainer where I delivered comprehensive ICT training among the LRA war victims,

on how to effectively use ICT skills to maximize productivity in their livelihoods ventures.

Prior to my enrolment at UCT, I also worked for USAID Uganda health systems strengthening project as a biomedical data analyst. The project's main objective was to build the capacity of the government health facilities to diagnose, test and managed HIV/AIDS and TB epidemic among Uganda communities.