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### **AKAD MENTORSHIP DAY 2017**

Opportunities come, opportunities go but what makes the difference is if you are willing to take the opportunity. I got the opportunity to attend a youth mentorship led by AKAD Education Group after reading their article from The Standard newspaper. At first I thought, 'How will this help me, I've been talked to by a lot of people?' Then I came to realization that I was wrong, I was very wrong. The seminar had various lessons and activities which help in the development of a leader.

The themes of the event was confidence building, negotiation for leadership, leadership theories and effectiveness, career success talk, some team building games and admission to Ivy League Universities. This is for the case of Ernest Ochieng, who got a full scholarship to Harvard University. The event took place on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2017 at MOW Sports Club, South C Nairobi from 8:00am to 4:30pm.

We engaged in team building activities led by Mercy and Steve. For example, the aim of the game Traffic jam was not only to get to the other side of the road but also teach on co-operation. I learnt that while moving forward we will be faced with problems and challenges and we must be able to solve them rather than to avoid them. Personally I was afraid of making a mistake but a friend told me that we must try so as to move forward. This showed that we needed *teamwork*. I will be able to work as a team with my colleagues in school because it is in teamwork that we get solutions to problems.

Rosemary Wambui, an AKAD associate, taught on the importance of humor. It helps to connect with the audience by use of catchy phrases. She also taught on how to embrace challenges by being creative rather than avoiding them. On the topic of public speaking, she talked on knowing your audience as it will assist to know what to dress, what to say, how to say it and to avoid making rush decisions. She raised a point on how a leader should go low so that the people being led can be in same level with the leader.

The founder and CEO of AKAD, Rev. Dr. Julius Weche, taught on how to analyze our BATNAs, WATNAs, ZOPAs and POSS in life. These acronyms are your win and lose scenarios and they help in making informed decisions about possible options for a deal. The purpose of the analysis is that the parties make their choices having considered and in full knowledge of the probable alternative outcomes. This will help create a win-win situation for the involved parties.

The Chief Guest Speaker, Ernest Ochieng Omondi, talked about his journey to Harvard University. He also talked on some application processes to join the Ivy League Universities like one must do well academically, must be in a position to write application essays, to be recommended by others, to write ACTs among others. He told us how he applied for around 13 universities in the United States, having in mind that an application form cost 90 dollars but thanks to AKAD he met the financial needs of the universities. This led him to introducing to our fresh brains a business term called the cost-benefit analysis. This term means that one should be in a position to see what are the costs incurred in doing a certain task and at the end of it all what are the benefits. He mentioned that the benefits must out-do the costs. Ernest

concluded his talk by talking about failure, that it is feedback of what you have done. Success comes from failure and people are always afraid to fail, that's why they don't succeed.

The Standard Media Group, represented by Gloria, was also present. She took part in our team building activities and told us about the various jobs in the media. She challenged Julius Weche to start an educational forum for the youth so that she could consult on whether the show could be aired. She gave gifts to the most active participants in the seminars.

The afternoon session was piloted by Eric Fairweather, a form 4 student at Lenana School. He talked about communication skills and divided it into the verbal and the non-verbal ques. On the branch of non-verbal ques, he talked of proper dressing as a sign of proper attitude, respect, maturity, preparedness and thoroughness. He also talked of the facial expressions and the body language to properly communicate with your audience. For proper communication, he talked on the verbal ques to be variation of intonation, a low volume, branding your voice, talking at a slow pace. Eric also tacked the Big Money Skills which include; an upright standing posture, repeating some phrases, a firm handshake and appropriate gestures. I learnt that the ultimate goal of speaking to an audience is to convey the message, solicit feedback and also be memorable. Eric concluded his time by giving us a quote, "Leaders know the way go the way and show the way."

Led by Christie Weche, a mentor and a student at Loreto Convent Valley Road, a session of group discussion was engaged and the main topic was how to use leadership. I learnt that leaders are optimists and they are not afraid to make mistakes. I learnt on the importance of researching, planning and preparing to do a certain task. When addressing people, body language speaks a lot and I should be in a position to be keen with what I do with my hands. This means maintaining eye contact with the people and having a clear mind, which will help overcome stage freight.

In conclusion, AKAD has built my confidence and my ability to understand the different view of others on a particular task. I enjoyed my stay with AKAD and look forward to another time being with them.



*Me with Ernest Omondi during the AKAD Mentorship Day*

