

MENTORING FUTURE LEADERS



Name: Collins Kinyua ireri

School: Lenana School

Phone: +254 705 051 135

E-mail: legendireri@gmail.com

Opportunities strike once in a lifetime that is why when I was informed of AKAD's event at BIDCO just barely three days after I had completed my Kenya Certificate Of Secondary Education I took to my heels got ready on that chilly Saturday morning and at 6:45 am on 2-12-2017 my journey to BIDCO'S headquarters began. As always I am thrilled by a good venture and knowing of AKAD'S reputation I knew I was in for a treat. The journey was rather slow as the driver struggled to maintain the speed limit. I remember the annoying beep every time the driver exceeded the limit, "it was really irritating."

Finally we arrived at the venue and as always I am a bit confused when I am in a new environment. The mood was cold as no one seemed eager to break the ice, even though members whom I knew from Lenana were present I was still hesitant to start a conversation for reasons I can't explain. At about eight o'clock, AKAD mentees quickly sprang to action and began with ice breakers that were fun and interesting. From these ice breakers I learned that communication and team work is key and that for a team to be effective one has to talk while others listen.

By the time we had settled down in the hall where the meeting was to take place it was past nine o'clock which meant we were way behind schedule due to transport difficulties. The first session was spearheaded by none other than the lovely Dr. Angela Gichaga, who took us through a rather interesting session on youth and leadership. Her session was fun since members in attendance were actively involved in defining youth and leadership I remember in one of the quotes she quoted she said, "unless leadership is inspirational it is not true leadership" this I agreed with her completely since for me a leader ought to be courageous and unique in his or her own way.



What caught my eye with dr. Angela's session was when she invited a panel and asked them questions such as what would have been different for them if they had been informed on youth and leadership when they were younger. A particular member in the crowd asked Dr.Vimal Shah, one of the panelist and the chief guest for the day, of his reason

to wake up early and I remember him saying that if you think you have to do something then you will probably never achieve it but if we wish to achieve something then new are more likely to succeed.

The break for me was short and delightful as I got to bond with fellow Lenana schoolmates and met a few new friends I was also able to get a view of Thika, "beautiful place indeed"

Dr. Vimal Shah's session was brief and informative which began at about 11:40 and kicked off with a reading of his rather amazing profile that contained his cell to fame, current initiatives and his history. He began his speech with an in-depth briefing of his simple history that was outstanding in many ways for he was born, Educated and works in Kenya and did not study abroad as many would have thought would be a reason for such success as he had attained. He challenged us to see every challenge in Kenya as an opportunity for success and to seek for solutions. One of his quotes he said "go MAD" meaning "go Make A Difference." From this session I learnt to keep my mind opened.

I remember when Boniface was given a chance by Dr. Reverend Julius Weche to pitch his idea together with Eric Kimony and they did a superb job that challenged me to go forth and initialize my own initiative.



Before lunch we were dispersed into groups according to our own interests for example those interested in being Chief Executive Officers, Marketers or those generally interested in starting their own businesses. This session in the group I was in was chaired by the new Chief Of Operations at BIDCO, “Dave”, who was also in charge of

launching BIDCO’s new product “suntop.”What I learnt most in this session was that we need other people and that one person could possibly not know everything. I decided to recruit a team to help me launch my initiative to the world.

Lunch was sumptuous and I enjoyed it especially BIDCO’s new product, “**Noodies.**” After socializing for about half an hour we proceeded to the highest floor in the BIDCO office where we had a virtual tour of the manufacturing industry and it was interesting to see how everything was in sync. Once again the AKAD peer mentors swung to action and we had a session on Team Building that was priceless as I learnt how to communicate non-verbally which will help me in my non-verbal cues.



The last session was conducted by Dr. Reverend Julius Weche who also extensively covered the topic on leadership and what really stood out for me were the four questions of leadership which were Agility (flexibility), Authenticity, Talent and Sustainability.

This event was a once in a lifetime opportunity and thanks to AKAD my mind is pursuing new pastures. I sincerely thank BIDCO for hosting us and Dr.Vimal Shah together with Dr. Angela Gichaga for availing their time.