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Dreams from a village from the hills

The bus came to a stop a few meters away from the bridge; from this bridge we were to find our way to Uper Kabete Campus gate. With the huge luggage that we had I knew it will be a long tiresome trek but that did not affect my eagerness to be in the new place that will be home for four year. My dad did not let me down on this occasion as he could not miss the opportunity to hand me over to the world.

I had promised him many years back to work hard to join the rest of the students from many cultural and academic backgrounds. The queue at the principle's office was long but we managed to register and I was officially a student of the University of Nairobi and allocated a room in Tana C where this new life had to begin. As I escorted my father to the gate I knew I am all alone and I had to face not only the books but life. This was now Nairobi away from the life on the green hills that I was used to and so different from life during my days at Riokindo Mixed Secondary School where I was a day scholar. Having achieved my first dream achieving the second dream here was not easy. We had students from all the famous schools and I had to study even harder to get to and remain in the top quarter.

This course was not an easy one as I earlier thought as we had many units which at first I thought they were misplaced but later realized how they helped to prepare us for the core courses. In first year veterinary anatomy, organic chemistry, inorganic chemistry and Biochemistry kept us glued to books in addition to many other courses. In the subsequent years we had to tune ourselves to Genetics, statistics, farm power, plant pathology frequencies to continue to the next class. The small number of students helped students to closely interact with lecturers to cement excellent academic and practical skills to enable students succeed in the industry. I benefit a lot from mentorship and guidance from a number of lecturers who remains forever indebted for their effort. My faith in God helped me keep good company and remain focused to my studies. I specialized in crop protection following my passion for plant pathology related units. Having been raised in an agricultural rural homestead I was well aware of the challenges and losses that

are caused by plant diseases. Our four year course came to an end with a graduation ceremony in 2001 where we were given powers to do what pertained to our degrees.

Soon after graduating I joined the flower and vegetable production industry. I was first employed as a Technical officer with Homegrown (Currently known as Finlays) and worked mainly in the beneficial insects production department (IPM). I was part of the team that made beneficial insect production protocols that are in use with many local companies to date and contributed a lot to implementing IPM successful IPM strategies for the farm. In 2003 I joined Shalimar flowers (part of East Africa Growers association) as a Technical manager in charge of production of vegetables and flowers. Having gained knowledge in crop production I joined Vegpro Kenya limited in 2005 as the company Agronomist where I helped implement ambitious growth plans where the company operated more than seven farms and a number of small scale growers schemes. Since 2010. I am the Technical development representative in charge of east and Central Africa with Monsanto. Focusing mainly in new variety/technologies introduction, regulatory and marketing framework facilitation and training. Licensed crop protection adviser by British Agrochemical Standards Certification Scheme (BASIS) Licence No. E/5193/ICMV and Fertilizer Advisors Certification and Training Scheme (FACTS) certificate No. FE/30350/V. I was among the first group of ODL Master program which I joined in 2010 and graduated in 2014 with a Masters degree in Crop protection.

When not playing piano during my free time I am a consultant with Tropitech Kenya Limited www.tropitechkenya.com assisting in farm audit implementation for farms including Tesco nature's choice, GlobalGAP, Fairtrade, Organic farming standards, Mark and Spencer, Woolworth, MPPS among others. Trainer with COLECEAP-PIP and MESPT projects. Carry out Environmental audits, health and safety audits for farms and workplaces. I am also a Commercial Pilot (CPL) student with Skylink flight services based at Wilson Airport where I am scheduled to earn my license by June 2015.

