

What they said...



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Kevin Githuku, Alumnus



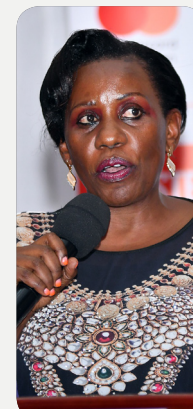
“Our deepest gratitude is to the Mastercard Foundation and Makerere University who have not only invested in our education but also in the rebuilding of lives and the restoration of hope. Your belief in us has been the driving force to this great day.

Safali Libia, Alumnus



“To the Mastercard Foundation and Makerere University, we are forever indebted, for giving us a chance to attain a quality education. As we graduate, let us continue to build for the future, and giving back to our communities. May our new path have life-changing opportunities

Doreen Nyago, Alumna



“Through the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Programme, we are contributing to achieving the Young Africa Works strategic goal of enabling 30 million youth in Africa, particularly young women, to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030.

Prof Justine Namaalwa, programme coordinator



Makerere University graduates from the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program alongside officials from Mastercard Foundation celebrate during their dinner recently.

PHOTO/MICHEAL KAKUMIRIZI

145 scholars of Mastercard Foundation graduate at Makerere University

Committed. The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program has supported more than 1,000 young people at Makerere University.

BY JOAN SALMON
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From being a house help at the age of 13 to doing several menial jobs, Ms Doreen Nyago has done almost every hustle to survive and realise her goal of acquiring a university degree.

The family she worked for extended a helping hand to educate her but later stopped due to financial constraints. This was a big blow to her dream.

Ms Nyago being the first child to acquire an Advanced Level (A-Level) certificate in her family, needed to look for all the possible opportunities to advance her education to inspire the younger generation in the family.

Before this, Ms Nyago had spent seven cumulative years out of school, but she never gave up on her goal of graduating with a degree.

She desperately needed a miracle and it came from one of her friends who forwarded her a message informing her about the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program.

The program offers scholarships to bright but underprivileged children who have demonstrated a commitment to making a difference in the lives of others. She applied through Makerere University and was selected.

“The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at Makerere University selected me because I had a unique story about my background,” she says.

She graduated with a Bachelors

Degree in Record and Archives Management at Makerere University.

Displaced with no hope

Mr Safari Libia is a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, currently living in the Kyegegwa Refugee Settlement. He became a Mastercard Foundation Scholar at Makerere University in 2019, under the fifth cohort, and has graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Economics.

Looking back after his Senior Six, there was no hope of further education until the Mastercard Foundation advertised scholarship opportunities. He applied and got the scholarship.

Mr Libia says the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program was his only option and could not let it go.

“For many of us, the path to edu-

SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program prepares talented and diverse young people with a commitment to giving back with the skills and mindsets they need to pursue their aspirations and enrich their communities. The Program is more than just a scholarship. It offers mentoring, leadership skills development, tutoring, internship opportunities, and career services in addition to covering tuition and basic living expenses.

cation has been far from easy. As refugees, we have faced displacement, our nationality has been robbed, uncertainty, and faced with the harsh realities of starting a new life in unfamiliar lands. However, through the support of the Mastercard Foundation, we have been given the chance to rewrite our stories, to break through from

the limitations that circumstances may have imposed upon us,” he says.

Help at last

With no idea of his father's whereabouts and the demise of his mother at a tender age, Mr Kevin Githuku was left to whoever would help to see him through school.

“Most of my life, I have been supported to get an education. So when I finished A-Level, I thought I would find a way to relieve them of the immense sacrifice,” he says.

Mr Githuku who was part of the fifth cohort graduated with a Bachelor of Journalism and Communication and longs to become a voice for the voiceless.

He is practicing journalism at Nation Media Group and looks forward to being a trusted leader.

“I want to be the voice that can be trusted in society to fight for the right causes in a very justified, ethical manner, as we have been taught by the foundation,” Mr Githuku says.

Ms Nyago, Mr Githuku, and Mr Libia are part of the 145 scholars of Mastercard Foundation who graduated during the 74th graduation ceremony of Makerere University held from January 29 to February 2, 2024.

As part of the scholarship, Mastercard Foundation provides welfare, psychosocial support, entrepreneurship and leadership, career

development and guidance, and mentorship to the scholars.

Empowering the youth

Mr Adrian Bukenya, the Country Director of Mastercard Foundation in Uganda, says the foundation is a vehicle to enable scholars and young people across Africa to succeed through addressing systemic barriers in higher education, strengthening capacity, supporting innovative solutions across critical sectors, and connecting ecosystem actors.

"The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program was launched in Africa in 2012, to enable young people to pursue secondary and tertiary education and develop their leadership skills, but most importantly, impact their communities," he says.

To date, the scholars program, across the globe, has supported nearly 50,000 young people with the hope of doubling their reach by 2030. With Makerere University, the reach has been more than 1,000 young people.

According to Prof Justine Namaalwa, the Program Coordinator, 934 of these have graduated hence a 91 percent execution mark for the programme.

Commendable strides

"Through the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, we are contributing to achieving the Young Africa Works strategic goal of enabling 30 million youth in Africa, particularly young women, to secure dignified and fulfilling work by 2030," she says.

Prof Umar Kakumba, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, says during the first phase of the scholars program, there was a 98 percent retention rate, which is above the set 90 percent, and a 76 percent intake of the girl child in the first cohort. Additionally, 37 percent of these are formally employed, 11 percent are engaged in entrepreneurship and 3.8 percent are pursuing further education.

Second phase

Prof Kakumba, who is also the Steering Committee Chairperson, says Makerere University through a rigorous process last year, was awarded the second phase of the

SCHOLAR COLLEGE DISTRIBUTION

Colleges	Female	Males	Total
COBAMS	29	8	37
CEES	31	4	35
CEDAT	8	10	18
CHUSS	5	11	16
CHS	3	11	14
COCIS	9	1	10
CAES	7	1	8
CONAS	1	4	5
COVAB	1	1	2
SoL	-	-	-
Total	94	51	145



Mr Adrian Bukenya, Country Director, Mastercard Foundation. PHOTO BY MICHEAL KAKUMIRIZI

scholars program which will run for the next 10 years with a target of 1,000 students.

In the second phase, he says, the foundation is targeting 70 percent females and 30 percent males, while 10 percent of the scholarships will go to youth with disabilities and 25 percent to refugees and internally displaced youth.

After graduating

Ms Claire Akini-Muga, one of the scholars established a leadership academy and hired more than 1,000 young people with es-

sential skills.

Mr Faisal Aligo, another scholar, co-founded a food processing company and is supporting hundreds of farmers.

Ms Nyago understands the essence of giving back and at the moment, she is paying school fees for a boy she adopted.

"I believe if I continue doing that and talking to the young generation to show them they can, I would have set a mark," she says.

Apart from the other pecks that come with the scholarship, the foundation also supports entrepreneurs through different platforms such as Resolution, and Anzisha projects.

Mr Libia who started the 'Hand for a Refugee' project, his give-back vehicle in the settlement benefitted from both programs.

"Through the Anzisha and Resolution programs, I got financial and technical help to establish the 'Hand for a Refugee' that I am using to equip refugees in the settlement with modern agricultural skills. With improved agricultural practices, the refugees can have some income, elevating their livelihoods," he says.

Through the project, he has touched almost 100 people through different activities such as fish farming, passion fruit farming, and horticulture (vegetables).

Best performing scholars



ing from the West, my chances were very slim but my sister encouraged me.

To date, I think that flooding was a blessing in disguise because I applied under the slot of internally displaced people.

The Mastercard Foundation brought many people into my life and taught me the essence of being humane.

Having had someone hold my hand all through my life, even with the struggles, I have managed to study amidst a community where girls are married off as early as 10.

Therefore, throughout my time in this program, I have mentored people, even back home where I gathered different teenagers to talk about life and show them that there is light at the end of the tunnel. I pledge to continue doing that.

I'm also passionate about education and desire to help people through school. It could be something as small as helping someone apply for a scholarship. If the money allows, I could help get them scholastic materials.

Naomi Ayebare - Bachelor Degree in Community Psychology.

PHOTO BY MICHEAL KAKUMIRIZI



Dilish Abonga receives an outstanding performance award from Prof Maggie Kigozi. Left is Prof Justine Namaalwa, the program coordinator. PHOTO BY MICHEAL KAKUMIRIZI

I first heard about the Mastercard Foundation during my Senior Six vacation in 2019 from my former head teacher.

I then applied to the university on private entry where I was admitted and thereafter applied to the foundation.

Later, I was shortlisted for the interview which I passed. As part of the scholarship, we were given accommodation, tuition, and a monthly stipend, part of which I sent home to help my mother with my siblings.

Without the Mastercard Foundation, I would never have attained a university education, condemned to a miserable village life because

even getting to Senior Six was a struggle. Mastercard Foundation redefined my life and gave me hope.

Having attained the Bachelors Degree in Environmental Health Science, which deals with public and community health at large, I intend to give health education and promotion to my community.

That will help us prevent many diseases. I will also use part of my salary after getting a job to do some entrepreneurship skills to train youths in the community on creating money-generating projects.



Graduates and Mastercard Foundation officials cut cake during the graduation ceremony in Kampala recently. PHOTO BY MICHEAL KAKUMIRIZI