AMUKA foundation

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GIRLS MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

JUSTINA SUNTO HARGURA







Can you tell us about yourself; your name, where you are from, and what you are currently doing?
My name is Justina Sunto Hargura, and I am from Karare. I am currently a 3rd year student at Maseno University, pursuing a Bachelor of Education Arts with IT. My goal is to become a teacher and use my education to make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

What was your childhood like growing up in Karare?
Growing up in Karare was not easy. We faced many challenges as young girls, and there were many difficulties that could make us lose hope. However, when Amuka Foundation came into our community, things started changing. Through their support and mentorship, we were able to overcome many of the challenges we faced.My family and community were an important part of my upbringing. Life was tough, but we learned to be strong, hardworking, and supportive of one another. The challenges we experienced also taught us to appreciate opportunities whenever they came our way.

What were your dreams and ambitions as a young girl?
As a young girl, I dreamed of getting an education and having a better future. I wanted to become someone who could make a difference in my community and inspire other young girls to believe in themselves.

How did you come to know about Amuka Foundation?
While I was at Loruko Primary School, Amuka Foundation came to our school and was selecting girls who were performing well in Class Six.I was chosen to become part of the Girls Mentorship Programme. In 2019, we were among the first pupils to be mentored through the Amuka Foundation programme.

What did you think when you first heard about GMP?
At first, I was excited and curious because it was something new to us. I did not know how much the programme would eventually influence my life. I wanted to participate because I wanted to learn, grow, and understand more about myself and my future. I also wanted to meet other girls and be part of something that was creating opportunities for young people.

What were some of the activities you took part in?
We took part in mentorship sessions, discussions, learning activities, games and sports and different activities that helped us build confidence, understand ourselves, and think about our future. One of the lessons that stood out to me was learning about being yourself, self-discipline, self-awareness, and being courageous. GMP taught me to understand myself, believe in who I am, and have the courage to face challenges and make good choices in life.

What do you remember about the 2019 Mentorship Camp?
I remember being among the first girls to experience the programme. It was also my first time travelling beyond the neighbouring village of Kamboe, and my first time to visit Nairobi. I got the opportunity to meet many new people who made an impact on my life.
Most importantly, that was the time I met Mr. Terry, who noticed my football skills. He believed in me and started supporting my education. Until today, he continues to support my education, and I am very grateful for the opportunity and support he has given me.

What did it feel like being part of the camp as a young girl?
It felt very special and exciting. I was experiencing many new things for the first time, meeting new people, and learning from different mentors. It opened my mind and made me see possibilities beyond what I was used to.

What are your greatest memories and lessons from Camp?
I will never forget when our KCPE results came out while we were having our morning inputs. It was a very important moment for us. After the results came out, I was fortunate to meet a well-wisher who was ready to support my education. That moment gave me hope and became an important turning point in my life because it opened a new opportunity for my education. I learned about self-discipline, self-awareness, courage, confidence, and the importance of being myself. I also learned that despite the challenges we face, we can still dream and work towards achieving our goals. Camp helped me see myself differently. It made me believe that my background and the challenges I faced did not have to determine my future. It gave me hope and encouraged me to work hard for my education.

At the time, did you understand how significant the experience would become in your life? Not completely. At that time, I was simply a young girl enjoying the experience and learningnew things. Looking back now, I realise that the Camp was a very important turning point in my life.

What does life after school look like?
Immediately after completing secondary school, I joined the Amuka Foundation office for a short attachment, where I worked with the team and helped deliver Girls Mentorship Programme activities. Later, I joined a computer school in Isiolo County, where I studied computer packages. After completing the course, I received my university admission and joined Maseno University, where I am currently pursuing my education.
My goal is to use my education and experience to inspire and support young people, especially girls, just as others supported me.

On reflection, how did GMP influence the choices you made after school?
GMP taught me to value education, believe in myself, and be courageous. The encouragement I received gave me the confidence to continue pursuing my education and to look for opportunities that could help me achieve my dreams. Enrolling into university is one of the achievements I strongly connect with the encouragement I received through GMP. The programme helped me believe that I could overcome challenges. Through GMP I gained self-discipline, self-awareness, courage, confidence, resilience, and communication skills. These are values that I still use in my education, my work with others and my everyday life.

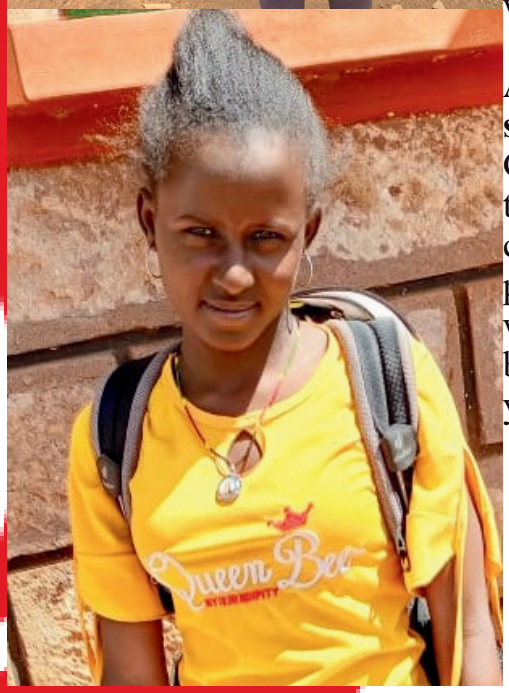


In 2024, you returned to GMP Camp as a mentor. What did that experience mean to you?
Returning to GMP Camp in 2024 as a mentor was very meaningful and emotional for me. I had once been a young girl receiving mentorship, and now I had an opportunity to return and encourage other girls. I could see myself in some of the girls. The experience made me realize that every girl has her own story, challenges, strengths, and dreams. I also learned that sometimes simply listening to someone, encouraging them and believing in them can make a big difference. I was able to watch the girls become more confident and open as the programme continued. On reflection, as a mentee I understood GMP from the perspective of a young girl receiving support. As a mentor, I understood the responsibility that comes with giving that same hope, encouragement, and guidance to another girl.



What has been the biggest impact of GMP on your life?
The biggest impact has been helping me overcome challenges and believe that I can achieve my dreams. Amuka Foundation has been part of the journey that made me. Mentorship gives girls hope, confidence, guidance, and someone to look up to. Growing up in Karare was not easy. Programmes like this help girls understand that their circumstances do not have to limit their future. Girls need education, support, encouragement, good role models, confidence, and opportunities. Most importantly, they need people who believe in them.

What would you like to see GMP achieve in the future?
I would like GMP to reach even more girls and continue supporting them academically, socially, and personally. I would also like to see more girls who go through the programme become mentors and give back to their communities. There should be more camps and mentorship opportunities, providing more girls the chance to learn, build confidence, discover their potential, and connect with people who can positively influence their lives.



And finally, what would you say to anyone considering supporting the Girls Mentorship Programme?
Girls Mentorship is investing in the future of young girls, building their confidence and ability to make informed decisions. Life is challenging, at time it is tough, but as one who benefited from the programme, today I am pursuing my university education and working towards becoming a teacher. This is a dream I always had but never thought it would come true. My advice to every girl “If you are scared do it scared.”