



Kucetekela Foundation Newsletter

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Leadership, Service & Global Growth: Term Two Highlights



Masuku Simasiku Mukena

General Manager

General Manager's Message

Dear Friends of Kucetekela Foundation,

It brings me great joy to share the highlights from Term Two, 2025 — a period marked by academic excellence, remarkable leadership, and meaningful community engagement across our student body and alumni. The stories in this edition reflect the heart of our mission: empowering young people from vulnerable backgrounds with opportunities that transform their lives and inspire them to give back.

Our students and alumni continue to shine — whether in STEM leadership, cultural exchanges, arts-based innovation, community service, or tertiary academic success. Their achievements affirm the long-term impact of your generosity and partnership. As we move forward, our commitment remains steadfast: to nurture integrity, academic strength, leadership, and service-driven citizenship among Zambia's next generation of leaders.

Thank you for standing with us. Your continued support ensures that every student featured here — and many others not included — can dream bigger, achieve more, and uplift their communities.

Warm regards,

Masuku Simasiku Mukena

General Manager, Kucetekela Foundation

My JETS STEM Leadership Journey

By Jackson Banda, Grade 11



Being part of the Junior Engineering Technical Society (JETS) has been an eye-opening experience, offering students like me hands-on exposure to STEM through challenges, projects, and competitions.

This year, I had the privilege of serving as the Events Coordinator for JETS, a role that allowed me to guide and inspire my peers while organizing many high-level activities. My goal was to design activities that not only tested academic knowledge but also encouraged teamwork, problem-solving, and creativity.

As Event Coordinator, I had to plan and execute STEM Olympiads, subject-based quizzes, and STEM exhibitions. These events brought together students from different backgrounds and skill levels. Every single event demanded careful coordination, resource management and the ability to inspire my fellow students to participate.

The STEM Olympiads I organized were designed to create competitive yet collaborative environments. Students could test their knowledge in mathematics, physics, chemistry, and engineering principles. These competitions fostered healthy academic rivalry while building camaraderie among participants.

I also coordinated the subject-based quizzes, dividing participants by grade levels to ensure fair competition and encourage teamwork. Each event was designed to spark curiosity, strengthen focus on STEM subjects, and motivate students to think innovatively.

The STEM exhibitions were a special highlight, where students confidently showcased their projects to the wider school community, celebrating creativity and technical skill and inspiring younger students to pursue STEM fields.

My leadership role taught me so much about courage, planning, collaboration, and how to influence others. I discovered that effective leadership requires not just technical knowledge but also the ability to motivate teams, manage conflicts, and adapt to unexpected challenges.

JETS truly helped me discover new strengths, grow both academically and personally and contribute meaningfully to my school community. I also developed confidence in public speaking and presentation skills.

JETS isn't just about competitions or projects—it's about creating an environment where students can discover their potential, express creativity, and develop critical academic skills.

My Yale Young African Scholars Program Journey

By Isaac Mulenga, Grade 12



I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the prestigious Yale Young African Scholars (YYAS) Program, an immersive academic and cultural experience that connected high-achieving students from across Africa.

Being selected for YYAS was a huge recognition of my academic excellence, leadership potential, and commitment to making a positive impact in my community. The program provided me with access to world-class educators, mentors, and peers who share my passion for learning and social change.

The YYAS Program was held virtually and the curriculum included seminars on critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical leadership. These really challenged me to think beyond traditional boundaries and consider global issues from multiple perspectives.

The program was more than a learning platform - it was a community that allowed me to engage deeply with peers from diverse backgrounds.

Through cultural exchange activities, I learned so much about diverse African cultures, traditions, and the challenges facing different regions. I learned from my peers about the importance of community in African cultures.

YYAS reminded us that our voices matter, that our ideas can influence our communities, and that collaboration and resilience are key to addressing the challenges facing our societies.

During the program, I embraced a role of active participation and leadership. I contributed to discussions, offered insights, and listened carefully to diverse perspectives that expanded my understanding of complex issues. I participated in workshops covering topics from sustainable development to technological innovation.

Technical disruptions were a challenge, and I felt left behind at times, but I learned to remain calm, committed and contribute meaningfully to the courses. This experience taught me the value of resilience and adaptability, as well as the importance of 'stepping up' even in unexpected circumstances.

YYAS had a profound impact on me. It expanded my worldview, boosted my confidence and reinforced my belief that my background and experiences can be a source of strength.

As a result of YYAS, I had a renewed commitment to academic excellence, a deeper understanding of my role in Africa's development, and valuable friendships with a network of emerging leaders across the continent.

For students considering this program: the experience will expand your academic horizons, enrich your cultural understanding, and inspire you to take your place as a future leader in Africa.



My Cultural Exchange Leadership Journey

By Ruth Sikaonga, Grade 12



Hathaway Brown Visits KF

I was honoured to play a leading role in the Eureka Camp cultural exchange that involved 21 high school students and teachers from Hathaway Brown School in Cleveland, Ohio, who came to visit us at KF. As one of the primary coordinators, I took on the responsibility of making sure our international guests experienced authentic Zambian culture, while also fostering meaningful connections between our local students and the visitors.

I taught Zambian cooking techniques, introducing our guests to traditional dishes and explaining the cultural significance behind different foods. I demonstrated how to prepare nshima, relish, and other local favorites, detailing the ingredients, cooking methods, and the communal spirit of Zambian meals.

My cooking sessions quickly became popular. Participants not only learned practical skills but also engaged in lively conversations about food security, agricultural practices, and the vital role of traditional cuisine in preserving our cultural identity.

I also helped guide team activities, organizing ice-breakers, collaborative projects, and cultural learning sessions that were designed to build genuine connections among all participants. I specifically designed activities that encouraged both Zambian students and our international guests to step outside their comfort zones and learn from each other.

One evening, I organized a lively karaoke night which turned out to be one of the most memorable events of the entire exchange. We started with just four people, but it soon blossomed into a lively gathering, with nearly everyone joining in the singing. The music, laughter, and emotions filled the night, creating a beautiful moment of connection and happiness that I will never forget. This evening truly broke down cultural barriers and forged lasting friendships.

At the end of the week, my friend Faith and I gave an emotional speech expressing our gratitude and joy for the incredible experience, reflecting the shared feelings of connection that everyone felt. The joy of these shared experiences was palpable, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere that made this event so special.

One of the challenges we faced during the exchange was the limited availability of cooking equipment, particularly a shortage of chopping boards. This could have slowed us down, but I was able to overcome this by teaching my group how to cut vegetables without a chopping board — a skill that impressed my friends from Hathaway Brown. This experience taught me the importance of adaptability and resourcefulness in solving problems.

I also learned valuable lessons about teamwork and communication, especially during group activities where cooperation was key to success. Beyond practical skills, the cultural exchange deepened my understanding of different backgrounds and showed me how much we share despite our differences.

This program strengthened my confidence in expressing myself and highlighted the power of empathy and connection across cultures, lessons I will carry with me for life. The personal growth and life lessons I gained from this experience are invaluable, inspiring me to continue seeking out opportunities for cultural exchange and personal development.



My Sustainability & Art Exhibition Journey

Catherine Mumbi, Grade 11



The 2025 Art Exhibition, a highly anticipated event during Term Two, was a vibrant celebration of creativity and self-expression. The event provided a collaborative platform for sharing innovative ideas among students, staff, and visitors, igniting a sense of anticipation and excitement.

I had the distinct honour of representing my Home Décor group at the 2025 Art Exhibition. It was a chance to showcase our impressive upcycled artworks, crafted from bottle caps, plastic containers, and various other discarded materials.

This exhibition provided a powerful platform for me to demonstrate how creativity and environmental consciousness can beautifully combine to produce functional and artistic pieces.

My group's display featured a diverse range of items, including decorative wall hangings, clever storage solutions, and artistic installations. We transformed what others considered waste into objects of beauty. For instance, we transformed bottle caps into a stunning mosaic and repurposed plastic containers into elegant planters.

I was thrilled to witness the enthusiasm and engagement of visitors, many of whom were eager to purchase our creations, or to commission custom work.

One of the exhibition's highlights was the incredible diversity of artistic expressions. From soul-stirring songwriting and dynamic modern and traditional dance performances to captivating music acts and intricate paintings, the exhibition featured a rich tapestry of talent.



Reflecting on this experience, one pivotal lesson that resonated with me was the undeniable influence of art in shaping the world around us. It opened my eyes to the beauty embedded in everyday objects and the thoughtful designs that often go unnoticed.

This exhibition served as a powerful reminder to appreciate the creativity that permeates our environment, whether in simple household items or elaborate artistic endeavours. It also taught me that art is not just about creating something beautiful, but also about making a statement and sparking conversations about important issues such as sustainability.

Participating in this exhibition was not just about showcasing our artistic talents, but also about personal growth and inspiration. The positive feedback we received from visitors, their admiration for our projects, and their encouraging words significantly enhanced my confidence as a budding artist.

This experience has inspired me to continue exploring the vast world of art, learning from my talented peers, and actively practicing my own creative abilities.

Giving Back: My Visit to Mount Makulu

Nelly Makondo, Grade 11



During the second term, I had the opportunity to return to my former school, Mount Makulu, the very school where Kucetekela Foundation selected me in grade seven.

The purpose of the visit was to introduce our cultural exchange guests from Hathaway Brown to the Mount Makulu students and to share my personal journey and growth.

It felt like a full-circle moment, walking into the very classrooms where I once sat, now ready to share my experiences.

I shared my academic journey, speaking candidly about the challenges I faced, the incredible support I received from Kucetekela Foundation, and the life-changing opportunities education has created for me. I hoped my speech resonated with students who might see themselves in my story.

Having spent seven years at Mount Makulu, I was a living testament to what dedication and perseverance can achieve.

My presentation covered my transition from Mount Makulu to higher education, the academic and personal growth I've experienced, and the many doors that have opened because of my commitment to learning.

I emphasized that success is possible for anyone willing to work hard and take advantage of available opportunities.

It was also an honor to introduce our cultural exchange guests from Hathaway Brown, a school in Cleveland, Ohio, to the Mount Makulu community. I truly felt like a bridge between cultures, helping both groups understand each other's contexts and find common ground.

I organized sessions where our Hathaway Brown guests shared their experiences, and our students eagerly asked questions about life in different countries. These conversations broadened everyone's perspectives and helped our students envision possibilities beyond their immediate environment.

Walking through familiar hallways and seeing my former teachers reminded me of how far I have come and the people who supported my journey. It was a profound reflection on my own growth.

Conversations with old classmates revealed their diverse paths and outcomes, reinforcing my immense gratitude for the opportunities I have received through Kucetekela Foundation. Some friends had faced significant obstacles, which only strengthened my determination to use my advantages to create positive change.

This experience reignited my sense of responsibility to give back to my community and to continue serving as a leader and role model for others. I have committed to maintaining regular contact with Mount Makulu, offering ongoing mentorship to students and supporting school initiatives.

This visit was a poignant reminder of where I come from and the importance of giving back. It allowed me to return to my old school as someone who has grown, learned, and achieved, and to inspire the next generation.

Sharing My IB Journey with Current Pestalozzi Students

Sherise Zulu, KF Alumna '24 - University of Pretoria, South Africa (100% Scholarship)



I recently returned to Pestalozzi Education Centre, as a recent IB alumna, to speak to the current IB students. Having successfully completed the rigorous International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme myself, I understood firsthand the unique pressures and challenges they were facing.

Walking through the gates of my former school, not as a student this time, but as someone invited to share their journey, felt surreal and empowering.

I shared candid lessons about my own experiences with burnout, time management, academic self-awareness, and the importance of collaboration. Rather than presenting an idealized version of my IB journey, I spoke honestly about my struggles, my mistakes, and the valuable lessons I learned through those difficulties.

During my talk, I emphasized one important truth I learned the hard way: the IB is not a one-man show. It is a program that thrives on collaboration, support, and shared understanding. I encouraged the students to lean on one another, to build a community that uplifts rather than competes. I stressed that asking for support demonstrates wisdom, not weakness.

The intensity of the IB programme can overwhelm even the most capable students and burnout was common. I shared the strategies I developed for recognizing early warning signs and taking proactive steps to maintain my mental and physical health.

I stressed the importance of time management—something I struggled with myself. I explained how I learned to prioritize tasks, break large projects into manageable steps, and balance academic demands with necessary rest and recreation.

Academic self-awareness was another important message I wanted to convey. I encouraged students to understand their own learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses, and tailor their approach to learning accordingly. It's not always about working harder, but about working smarter and more intentionally.

The most rewarding part of the day was seeing students nod in understanding, and many students approached me after to say they felt more confident moving forward. That made me feel truly useful. Knowing that my journey could inspire even one student to believe in themselves gave the whole experience purpose.

Teachers and administrators noted the powerful impact of peer mentorship, recognizing that students often receive advice differently when it comes from someone who recently walked the same path. My visit has inspired plans for regular alumni mentorship sessions, which I'm thrilled about.

Being chosen by my former school to speak felt like a recognition of growth. Overall, it was a wonderful, affirming experience that reminded me of the strength we gain when we turn our challenges into lessons for others.

-- Sherise Zulu, KF Class of '24, was awarded a Mastercard Foundation Scholarship and is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce in Business Management at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Thank You

To our Kucetekela Foundation donors, partners, alumni, and friends—your continued support makes every story in this newsletter possible.

Together, we are building a generation of leaders who will transform Zambia and contribute to Africa's bright future.

Your generosity changes lives.

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