



# **KLB Strategic Plan 2020–2024 Launched**



*Publishing and Printing for YOU*

**ONLINE EDITION**

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# VISION

"A knowledgeable  
and  
inspired society"

# MISSION

"To provide  
innovative and competitive  
publishing and printing solutions"

# VALUES

## Customer Focus

We are committed to delivering superior customer service.

1

## Integrity

We will strive to not only uphold but also demonstrate highest standards of honesty, accountability and impartiality in our engagements with all.

2

## Creativity and Innovation

We are committed to creating new ideas and harnessing emerging technologies in the development and delivery of publishing and printing solutions.

3

## Quality Publishing and Printing Solutions

We strive to produce publishing and printing products and services that meet the demands of our customers.

4

## Our Quality Policy

Kenya Literature Bureau is committed to and shall always endeavour to reach the highest level of quality in publishing and printing educational and knowledge materials as stipulated by the ISO 9001 : 2015.

## We will:

- Comply with regulatory and statutory requirements.

- Continually improve the effectiveness of our Management Systems.

- Achieve and ensure that our customers receive the highest quality service.

- As a team, be guided by strict adherence to laid down procedures and strive to be competitive and independent; and will protect and uphold our customers' interest without compromising the quality standards set.

Our quality objectives shall be established and reviewed at the regular management review meetings.



#### Published by:

KENYA LITERATURE BUREAU  
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## Editor's Note |

COVID-19 pandemic has tested the resilience of individuals and corporates. This is because human beings are hard-wired to connect with other human beings, and this has become much more difficult with the challenging health protocols of social distancing and mask wearing. Many of the things we took for granted in the past, such as being able to see someone's facial expressions or being able to shake hands or receive a hug from a friend or loved one when you need it is now not possible. A significant number of parents have had to content with home schooling challenges. Therefore, getting overwhelmed by the degree of change is a near possibility hence the increased cases of mental health in the society.

In this issue of *The Publisher*, we bring you accounts of important KLB events, including the recent launch of the *KLB Strategic Plan 2020-2024* at Boma Hotel, Nairobi on October 28, 2020. The new plan takes over from the previous Plan which was retired on June 30, 2020 and has important provisions for the continual growth of the Bureau.

We also present to you the profile of David Mwaniki, a long serving sales and marketing expert who retired in 2016 after more than 20 years of service. It is hoped that the story will inspire future generations of workers to make a difference in their career and organisation.

A book review and literary tome as well as a story on a recent book donation to West Pokot County is featured.

We invite you to read and enjoy.

Welcome.

Joseph Ndegwa



We are continuously striving to enhance the quality of our Newsletter by providing information in a simplified manner for all our readers to enjoy. We welcome you to send your articles that can be considered for publication in the next edition. We also request that you send us your feedback on [klbpro@klb.co.ke](mailto:klbpro@klb.co.ke) on what you would like to read as well as comments on how we can improve our Newsletter.



## Creating a firm foundation to build back better



The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives and tested our resilience in the face of adversity. It has impacted on everyone's lives in countless ways and created an unprecedented amount of change, including working from home that has stretched the work/life balance of employees and an increased volume of work following the temporary furlough of workers. The precarious future of the economy and the social implications of the pandemic with regard to isolation, social distancing and restriction of movement during lockdown also weigh heavy on people's minds.

However, there is hope. At Kenya Literature Bureau, adequate plans have been laid to mitigate

the effects of the pandemic on our business. Among others, a new *KLB Strategic Plan 2020-2024* was developed and launched on October 28, 2020 to guide the business operations of the Bureau for the next five years. It has a new vision and mission statement that outlines the purpose and values, objectives and strategies we intend to pursue to provide customer and shareholder value, and takes account of the dynamic business environment and strategic priorities of the Government of Kenya and the mandate of the organisation as outlined in the *Kenya Literature Bureau Act, 1980 Cap 209*.

Having been developed at the height of the pandemic, scenario mapping was done to ensure

that KLB remains resilient in the face of adversity. I encourage all of us to read, internalise the document and work towards implementing the noble goals outlined in the Plan.

KLB will continually reward staff for excellence. Let us, therefore, take seriously the 2020-2021 performance contract commitments as well as the ongoing target job evaluation and rationalisation exercise to establish a firm foundation that will enable us build back better. In pulling together, and pitching in, the Bureau will remain on a growth trajectory.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Victor Lomaria, OGW  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

## KLB Strategic Plan 2020–2024 Launched

By Ronald Kibaron

Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) recently launched its Strategic Plan 2020–2024 and unveiled an e-commerce store at an event

held at Boma Inn Hotel in South C, Nairobi. The five-year plan envisages a robust financially sustainable and customer focused institution. It prepares the Bureau to respond to emerging technological advancements and unpredictable business



*KLB Board Chairman, Amb. Francis Bayah (second left) presents copies of the Strategic Plan to the Principal Secretary, State Department of Early Learning and Child Development, Dr. Julius Jwan (second right) and KLB Managing Director, Victor Lomaria (right) looks on.*

trends in the publishing and printing industry in Kenya.

The previous Strategic Plan 2016-2020 prepared the ground for the new Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which focused on increased use of technology, expanded product portfolio, superior

product and services and enhanced institutional capacity and development. This new strategy builds on gains made in the previous one and comes at a time when there is business disruption globally, occasioned by Covid-19 pandemic and the ever changing technology.

The new KLB Strategic Plan spells out a new vision and four action plans that will shape the organisation's approach to education and open new frontiers in the publishing industry.

Speaking at the event, the Principal Secretary, State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education, Dr. Belio Kipsang, congratulated KLB for the guiding plan, which will steer the organisation for the next five years. He added that the Ministry of Education will continue to invest in the future, guiding book publishers to develop quality content for Kenyan children. He lauded KLB for embracing new technology

and the shift to e-commerce.

"We are gathered here today to celebrate this great milestone achieved by the Bureau towards realisation of Kenya's Vision 2030 and the Big Four Agenda. KLB books and other educational materials remain the best resources for learners in the country," said Dr. Belio.

Dr. Belio applauded KLB for having consistently met necessary Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development's (KICD's) curriculum guidelines and most recently for securing the regulators' approval for its eleven out of twelve Grade Five Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) book titles.

The Principal Secretary for Vocational and Technical Training, Dr. Julius Jwan commended KLB for the great work they have done in the publishing industry. KLB is the only publishing firm in the book industry with a fully-fledged printing



ing and Basic Education, Dr. Belio Kipsang (left) as the



press. Dr. Jwan encouraged publishers to give attention to the technical education sector adding that it is a barren area with limited resources and many users.

“TVET is an emerging economy. We are short of materials that support vocational learners and I want to encourage KLB and other publishers to venture into this new economy,” said Dr. Jwan.

KLB Managing Director, Victor Lomaria thanked all the guests for honouring the invite to attend the historic milestone adding that the Strategic Plan will assist the Board curve a niche in delivering a wide spectrum

of quality services within the publishing industry.

“This day is a celebration of the milestones we have achieved over the years, and of us setting the pace and standards in the publishing and printing industry,” said Mr. Lomaria.

KLB Board Chairman, Amb. Francis Bayah, said that the Strategic Plan 2020-2024 is an important landmark for the Bureau. He added that the document outlines the four main areas of focus for the organisation and provides a guide on how to remain a market giant in the region.

“As a Board we believe the four key strategic priorities are the most essential and

relevant to focus on. We have worked hard to ensure we have listened to our customers and key stakeholders so that we are able to deliver what they need,” said Amb. Bayah.

KLB Board Directors, John Kenduiwo and Prof. Winston Akalla took the guests through the overview of the Plan with focus on the key pillars.



*KLB MD, Victor Lomaria (c) receives ISO 9001:2015 Certificate from KEBS Director, Finance and Strategy, Mr. Adan Mohammed*



*Guests at the launch of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024*





## Nyachieng'a: Let's do our very best to transform KLB

Evans Toto Nyachieng'a is the Ag. General Manager, Commercial Services at Kenya Literature Bureau. He is a holder of an MBA in Strategic Management from Kenyatta University, a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Nairobi and KNEC Higher Diploma in Human Resources Management from the Railways Training Institute and a Practitioners Diploma in Marketing from the Marketing Society of Kenya.

He is an expert in Corporate Strategy formulation and implementation, Marketing, employee relations, training and development, performance appraisal and management, policy formulation and review, employee health and safety, project management, compensation, budget and benefits management, compliance, data and information analysis, risk management, training for

optimal performance and case study programmes. Mr Nyachieng'a has previously worked in various managerial and administrative positions in National Museums of Kenya, National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation and as a Personnel Officer at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources.

At KLB, he is responsible for three business units namely, Business Development, Sales and Marketing, and the Sales and Customer Service Branch along Kijabe Street. The editor of the *Publisher*, **Joseph Ndegwa**, had an exclusive interview with him. Here are the excerpts.

**Question:** Congratulations upon your recent appointment as the Ag. General Manager, Commercial Services. What went through your mind as a professional when the announcement was made? What are your goals?

**Answer:** I was delighted by the appointment to head the KLB Commercial Services

Division. I am looking forward to deliver on this challenge and I appeal to all staff to support us grow product sales and revenues from institutional printing jobs. If we succeed, I will make sure the credit goes to the people who did the work. In doing so, I acknowledge that the long term success of the Division lies on the collective effort and interplay of various drivers of change. Together with my team, we will strive to do our best to contribute positively to the growth of the Bureau.

**Question: The current career guidelines have envisioned GM Commercial Services and GM Operations. Have the two roles been merged under the new Strategic Plan 2020-2024? What does the role entail?**

**Answer:** The current *KLB Strategic Plan 2020-2024* has consolidated the two roles. This is meant to harmonise and establish clarity of roles of the three different functions – Sales and Marketing, Business Development and Sales and

Customer Service Branch – of the Bureau. Earlier, there were blurred reporting lines especially on book sales, where Business Development Department was assigned to handle County Governments and Sales and Marketing to deal with schools only. The overlap in functions has since been cured.

**Question: How do you see your current job contributing to the prosperity of the Bureau?**

**Answer:** KLB is a commercial enterprise engaged in the business of publishing and printing. The Division was established to reinforce the commercial element in our mandate, which calls on us to be innovative and enterprising to make KLB a profitable and stable government investment. As stipulated in the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, we plan to generate revenues from four major streams – book sales to government, book sales in the open market, printing sales and other non-textbook revenue sources. I believe

that with a business mind, teamwork, cost efficiency and cost effectiveness, we shall achieve and overshoot our annual revenue targets.

**Question: What plans, programs, projects and strategies to you have for the Division and how will they impact on the success of the Bureau to deliver these goals?**

**Answer:** The Division recognises that the publishing industry is liberalised and competition is cut throat. As guided by the Managing Director and Board of Management, we shall leverage on intelligence gathering on market preferences for purposes of improving our product development cycle and quality. The Bureau plans to invest in modern ICT and printing infrastructure, market research, next generation author recruitment and training, and adoption of cost efficiency methods of production and marketing. In the meantime, we shall continually partner with

the Ministry of Education and KICD to publish, print and service customer orders under the direct textbook distribution model.

**Question:** You are the pioneer driver of the KLB's institutional printing. What are some of the challenges have you encountered in the business?

**Answer:** I encountered challenges largely with regard to processes that often delayed payment for printing

jobs. We have since developed a new delivery note with in-built accountability features that would ensure prompt invoicing and payment. The other challenge was in pricing to match our competition. We had to, therefore, conduct market research to determine unit prices for products and give both the customer and shareholder value for money. Finally, limited and overstretched capacity to fulfil quality expectations and produce some items was a

challenge.

**Question:** Are there any specific interventions planned to shed off the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business?

**Answer:** At the onset, COVID-19 disrupted our business. It affected our turnaround times for printing jobs because of shift work schedules and social distancing at the printing press. As a matter of fact, some customers are yet to



Tharaka Nithi Deputy Governor Francis Kagwema (Third Left), KLB MD Victor Lomaria (Centre), Ag General Manager Commercial Services, Evans Nyachieng'a (Left), Education CEC Abraham Maruta (Second Left) and Igamba Ngombe KEPSHA Chairman Gitonga Mugo (Third Right) during flag-off of books to all county ECDE & TVET centres in Kathwana, Tharaka Nithi County.





*Kenya Literature Bureau Ag General Manager, Commercial Services, Mr Evans Nyachieng'a (right) and Mr George Ooko (former CEO of the Commission on Revenue Allocation) during the signing of a partnership deal at the CRA headquarters in 14 Riverside Drive, Nairobi.*

settle pay for serviced orders due to the effects of the pandemic on their incomes. As an organisation, KLB is on a recovery path and will invest more in print business to shore up our revenues.

**Question: In view of the nature of KLB's mandate, what methods do you use to assess operational effectiveness?**

**Answer:** I will support the organisation to deploy fewer resources in projects and activities to achieve more value. We use financial measures to determine our efficiency.

**Question: From personal experience, what would you**

**say makes KLB a preferred publisher, printer and employer?**

**Answer:** KLB is a brand; It enjoys name recognition in the country being the oldest publisher and printer in Kenya. Our products are of high quality and every child in the country has used a KLB book. The Bureau has also enjoyed a lengthy period of industrial harmony and our investments in land and buildings that houses the Publisher's headquarters and the Sales and Customer Service Brand gives KLB a strong foundation and edge in the industry.

**Question: If you are to pick one, what would you describe as your biggest strength?**

**Answer:** I believe in consultation. I consult, I listen. I also have the ability to create and foster teams for a common purpose.

**Question: As lead marketer, have you ever encountered a team that had a conflicting view about a deal? How did you go about it?**

**Answer:** As a Parastatal, all our operations are above board. Unlike our competitions, that often apply unorthodox means to secure printing business, KLB relies on its brand name and reputation for high quality productions at quick turnaround time. We have embraced an ethical approach to business.

**Question: Any parting shot?**

**Answer:** KLB is here to stay. It will outlive us. Let us work together and do our very best to leave it better than we found it.

# Kenya Literature Bureau Partners with West Pokot County to Increase Access to Learning Materials

By Ronald Kibaron

Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) has donated reading and learning materials to West Pokot County Government. The programme dubbed Twachapisha Mwasoma is under KLB's Corporate Social Value, which seeks to partner with counties and other stakeholders to improve literacy levels in the country.

Speaking while receiving the donation, West Pokot County Governor, Prof. John Lonyang'apuo, thanked KLB for the kind gesture extended to his County adding that the Publisher has done a lot in impacting the community positively. Prof. Lonyang'apuo further added that KLB remains the Publisher of choice and urged his colleague governors to partner with KLB in order to improve literacy.

"Few years ago, the illiteracy level at my County was at 67%. When I took over the leadership, I decided to invest in education. I approached Kenya Literature Bureau and I must say that has helped a lot

in improving the same. Keep up the good work KLB," said Prof. Lonyang'apuo.

KLB Managing Director, Victor Lomaria, thanked the governor for his passionate role in promoting education in his County. Mr. Lomaria added that KLB is open to all and will continue to research on and produce quality books that address the needs of the learners. He urged other governors to emulate Prof. Lonyang'apuo to improve literacy in the country.

The West Pokot Governor, Prof. John Lonyang'apuo and KLB Managing Director Victor Lomaria, also reviewed the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the two institutions. Present during the meeting were Ag. General Manager, Commercial services, Mr. Evans Nyachieng'a, Ag. General Manager, Finance and Administration, Mr. Francis Mutunga and Ag. Corporate and Communications Manager, Ms. Diana Olenja.



(L-R) Ag. General Manager, Finance and Administration, Mr. Francis Mutunga, Managing Director, Victor Lomaria, West Pokot Governor, Prof. John Lonyang'apuo and Ag. General Manager, Commercial services, Mr. Evans Nyachieng'a pose for a photo after handing over cartons of books to West Pokot.



## Loreto girl who became a leading author of CRE books

Professor Philomena Mwaura is an Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy and Kenya Literature Bureau's (KLB's) foremost author of Christian Religious Education (CRE) books for primary and secondary schools in Kenya. An alumnus of Loreto Primary and Secondary Schools where she did her 'O' Level and 'A' Levels. Prof Mwaura holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Literature and Religious Studies from the University of Nairobi, Master of Arts in Religious Studies

from Kenyatta University and a PhD in religious studies and philosophy from a sandwich program between Kenyatta University and the University of Birmingham. **Grace Gititha and Moses Murega** had an interview with her:

**Question: Professor where were you born?**

I was born in Ndumberi village, Kiambu County in 1957. My father was a primary school headmaster and my mother was a housewife. I am the firstborn of nine siblings. My parents were staunch

Catholics so I was brought up in Catholic faith.

**Question: Tell us about your education journey.**

I am proudly a Loreto girl; I went to Loreto Primary School, Loreto Secondary School Matunda for O' levels and Loreto High School for A' levels. I then proceeded to study Literature and Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi. Later, I pursued MA (Religious Studies) at Kenyatta University and a PhD through a sandwich program between Kenyatta University and the University of Birmingham.

**Question: How did your career journey begin?**

After graduating with a Bed (Arts), I taught CRE and English at Dagoretti and Loreto High School from 1983 to 1987. Through the Catholic Church, I was seconded to KICD to be a curriculum developer for Christian Religious Education materials in 1987 since the church had a constitutional mandate of development of CRE learning materials (it developed all



CRE Pupils' and Students' books). I joined KICD (then KIE) when 8-4-4 system had just kicked off and oversaw the development and publication of CRE materials in the new curriculum. We went round the country, training teachers, like they are doing at the moment with the Competency-Based Curriculum.

I later joined Kenyatta University as a tutorial fellow in 1990 and I have since raised to the position of Associate Professor in Religion and Philosophy teaching courses such as religion and society, religion and politics, church history, women's liberation and liberation theology.

**Question: What did you research on for your Masters and PhD?**

I have always had interest in studying African religious movements. That was the subject of focus in my MA and PhD thesis.

**Question: Any awards and recognitions?**

Yes. I have been awarded by my employer, Kenyatta

University, on several occasions as well as a few other universities around the world. Some of them include:

- 2018: Senior Research Fellow, Nagel Institute, Calvin College USA, May, August 2018.
- 2012: Recognised as 8<sup>th</sup> Position among Directors in Kenyatta University who had achieved their Performance Contract Targets.
- 2010: Awarded Senior Research Fellow at Yale Divinity School and Overseas Ministries Study Centre, New Haven, Connecticut, USA.
- 2007: Recognised the 4<sup>th</sup> among 50 top researchers in Kenyatta University.
- 2007: Awarded William Paton Research Fellowship at University of Birmingham, UK.
- 1996: Awarded a scholarship to study at the Centre for the Study of New Religious Movements at Selly Oak Colleges, University of Birmingham, UK.

**Question: When did you start writing for KLB?**

I started writing educational materials while working for KICD where I was in a panel that wrote Teacher's Guides for the CRE Pupil's Books already developed by the church. I then officially joined KLB in 1995 and since then I have co-authored CRE primary series, CRE secondary series and a number of revision series. I am now co-authoring Competency-Based Curriculum CRE materials.

**Question: When did you first realise you wanted to be a writer?**

This actually happened in an unexpected way. In 1981 I attended a Catholic Religious Education Workshop in which an article was presented and I was appalled at how substandard it was. On expressing my disappointment, I was asked to rewrite it and I produced a masterpiece. I have been unstoppable since.

**Question: Apart from curriculum books you**

**publish with KLB, are there other titles you have written or are working on currently?**

Yes. I have published many articles in referred journals, books, book chapters, and academic papers presented in Conferences, Workshops and Seminars where I am invited as the Guest Speaker. I am currently working on a book titled *Movement of the Spirit: Pentecostalism in Kenya, 1909-2018*.

**Question: What do you like to do when not writing or lecturing?**

I mostly watch movies, preferring drama and non-fiction genres.

**Question: Tell me about your family.**

I became a wife and a mother as I was pursuing my MA degree after getting married to Mr Mwaura. We have now been married for about 40 years and blessed with three children; ..... (her name) who is a lecturer at Strathmore University, ..... (put his name) who is a Banker in Cairo, Egypt and

..... (put his name) who is deceased.

**Question: What is the greatest satisfaction you get from writing?**

As an author, I can only compare the feeling of having a title published to the joy of holding a newborn baby; monetary rewards come later.

**Question: What would you say is the most unethical practice in the publishing industry?**

I consider plagiarism the most dishonest practice in this industry. It hurts for an author to find his or her work in books copyrighted to other people.

**Question: Do you believe that the authorities are doing enough to curb piracy in the country?**

No. Laws should be enacted to ensure copyrights are respected and stiffer penalties imposed to curb piracy.

**Question: Religion is being viewed in a different perspective by this generation compared to the**

**previous. What is your take on this?**

It is common for young people to question systems of morality including religion as they discover and establish themselves in the society. After reading several books on religion (including Marxist theories which describe religion as the opium of the people) as a young person I also had many unanswered questions about religion and even quit church at some point.

However, as the young people grow older and have their own families, they find themselves back in church for they must get a moral foundation to bring up their children in.

**Question: Should religious education be scrapped from the curriculum as suggested by some people?**

This is a worldwide debate. Some people have tried to advance an agenda to have Life Skills Education replace Religious Education in the curriculum. However, human morality cannot be imparted without a basis and

this is where religion comes in. Generally, there exists a vacuum in every human being that only religion can fill.

**Question: What is the most significant factor that shaped your success?**

My faith in God and the invaluable support from my family and employer (KU).

**Question: How has authoring aided your career as a lecturer?**

Writing for KLB, a trusted publisher in the region, has added great value to my career. While gathering content, I read and research a lot, which builds on my knowledge in the subject area. Publications have also helped me rise through the ranks in my career.

**Question: How has COVID-19 pandemic affected your profession?**

COVID-19 has affected everyone globally. The University had to be closed for sometime and even after resumption we have adopted blended learning, which means we have to produce

interactive teaching materials for students. We also couldn't conduct fieldwork and internationally all the lined up conferences were cancelled. However, I wrote about five articles during the season.

**Question: What advice would you give to the youth who would like to follow your path in lecturing/writing?**

Same old values; nothing comes without sacrifice, focus and persistence. If you want something go for it. For example, while seeking for a

PhD scholarship, I sent many requests till I finally got a positive response from Selly Oak College, University of Birmingham, UK.

**Question: Give us your parting short.**

My greatest lesson has always been the importance of persistence. Focus on what you want; do not give up, keep your eye on the ball. If you are persistent the universe will naturally support you and you will eventually get it!





# KLB Championing a knowledgeable and inspired society

*By Grace Gititha*

Books feed the mind. They are tools for freedom. Facilitators use them in training and in sharing knowledge. Books occupy a central place in an individual's life. As knowledge-building tools, they are considered as a catalyst for societal development.

In recognition of this, Kenya Literature Bureau developed the Strategic Plan 2020 – 2024 with a new vision aimed at creating “A knowledgeable and inspired society.”

In a knowledgeable society, the generation and dissemination of learning and teaching materials assume great importance.

At KLB, we are dedicated to support the Government's commitment to raise the standards of education in Kenya. We aim to publish and distribute high quality books

at affordable prices. We also give back to the society through the “Twachapisha Mwasoma” Book Donation Programme aimed at equipping and restocking public school libraries throughout the country.

The Bureau is changing the world by equipping libraries that serve needy children in our local communities. These underprivileged learners can now access storybooks and

other learning materials. In this way, we are nurturing a reading culture in our learners.

Children in remote villages across the country can now pick up a book and read, courtesy of Kenya Literature Bureau. We are glad to make this positive contribution in our society. The Bureau is indeed changing the narrative that the best way to hide something from an African is to put it in a book.

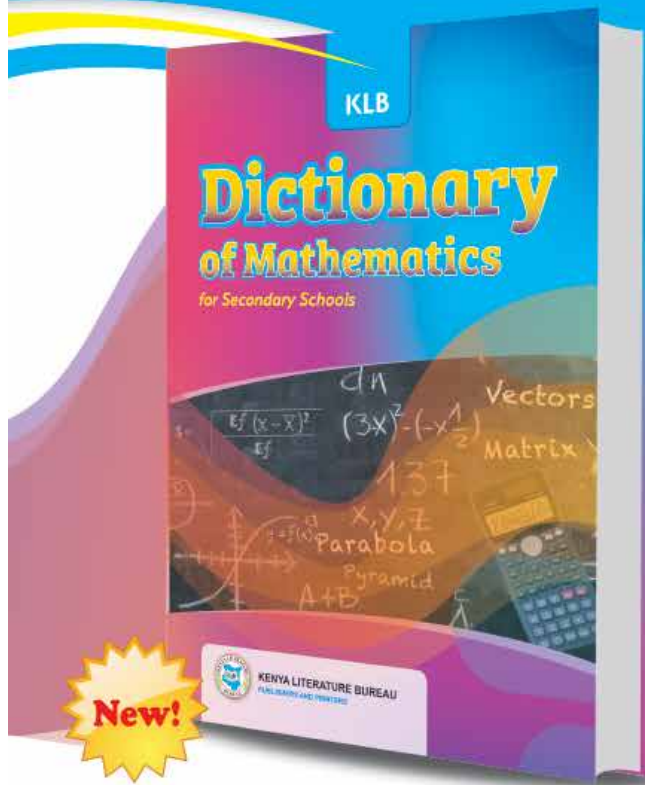
It is in serving this noble cause that the the KLB Caravan of Hope paid a courtesy call to the S-CBO Community Library in Nyahururu, and gave a donation of books.



*S-CBO Community Library officials receiving book donated by KLB*

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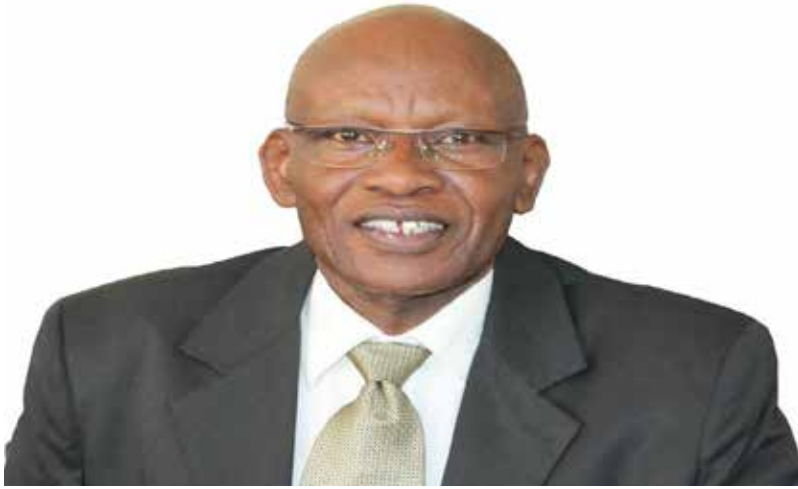
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VISION 2030





## Mwaniki: Teacher and salesman who loved his job

By Joseph Ndegwa

David Mwaniki Ndegwa retired in August 2016 when he was the Assistant Sales and Marketing manager at Kenya Literature Bureau, after attaining the mandatory retirement age of 60.

Mwaniki had a rich career, serving KLB for 22 years. He joined KLB in December, 1993 as a Sales Representative but rose through the ranks to become the Market Development manager charged with championing the establishment of market and product development functions and exploring external markets.

Mwaniki offered critical

input that saw KLB introduce brands such as the *Inventor*, *Alpha Series*, *The Innovator*, *Excelling in English* and *Distinction*. Together with the sales and marketing team, he championed other initiatives such as teacher seminars, use of bulk SMS and email service, e-books development and engaging contract sales representatives. “For six years, mine was a one-man office and it was draining,” he says. However, the position gave him the opportunity to travel all over Kenya and visit eight African countries, scouting for business.

“I leave behind one of the

smartest, sharpest, dedicated and disciplined teams in KLB,” he said during his farewell party at the Bureau’s headquarters in Nairobi’s South C on August 26, 2016. Speaking at the luncheon, Mwaniki was a relaxed man, branching into success philosophy, revealing to the gathering some of the gems that have carried him to the land of opportunity and honour as a seasoned teacher and a salesman.

“Regret is a product of stubborn and foolish pride, a wound that never heals. Never entertain it,” he said, allowing time to assess the body language of his listeners. “I have made many mistakes and shot myself in the foot several times, but all these have served to teach and improve me.”

Because this was a forum for people of all ages and experience, Mwaniki revisited the day he was being interviewed for the KLB assignment in September 1993. “As we sat in the waiting room for our interviews, being mostly teachers, we thought that Mugoya Phase 4 [property] was KLB staff houses,” he said laughing at their stretched imagination at

the time.

Prior to joining KLB, Mwaniki worked for three years at the Registrar General's Office (current State Law Office), that he says, taught him "how to write official correspondence and keep proper records, amongst other things." He also taught at Kagumo High School for 12 years, an experience he regards as "great".

He is the first born of John Ndegwa (deceased) and Susan Ndegwa. His siblings are Ann Wambui (deceased), Sarah Nyaguthii, Mary Wanjiku (deceased), Esther Muthoni

and Moses Macharia. In typical African tradition, he had an extended family that included two grandmothers and three grandfathers. The third grandfather was John Cole, a 6'5 feet tall and heavily built Welsh missionary nicknamed 'Matu-ini,' his late father's mentor. Their ancestral home is located 18 kilometres from Nairobi, in Kanyariri, Kiambu County.

Mwaniki's parents were disciplinarians and cared for their children's education, introducing him to books at an early age. "I am indebted to my father for the love of

books," he says.

"He noticed my love for reading books from age five up and quietly nurtured it by buying all sorts of interesting books whenever he had cash to spare," he adds. His mother's mantra was "spare the rode, spoil the child" and that "if a man does not work, he should not eat." She believed in hard work and always kept her children busy. "Growing up, there was no time to gallivant around the village, mixed commercial farming kept us busy."

He began schooling at his village in Kanyariri, where he says he learned nothing in standard 1 and 2, because of the "frequent beatings for any infraction were traumatizing." As a result, they were transferred and enrolled at AIC Kajiado Boarding School together with his cousin Njonjo Kihuria (a veteran journalist). In the school, they would sit in class with married Maasai men whose wives and children would come to visit them every weekend.

In February 1964, Mwaniki was enrolled at Thogoto Junior School (now Musa Gitau Primary School) on a scholarship. This was an elite



*David Mwaniki (former KLB Assistant Sales & Marketing Manager and Marjorie Mukui, Senior Assistant Sales and Marketing Officer (left) at a KLB exhibition booth in KICC, Nairobi, during the World's Intellectual Property Day celebrations on November 1, 2013.*





FROM L-R: David Mwaniki (former Assistant Sales & Marketing Manager), Robert Manaka (ICT Manager), Vallary Okello (former Assistant Administration Manager), Audrey Cheruto (Ag. Legal Services Manager), Roselyne Mugavana (HR Manager), Francis Mutunga (Ag. General Manager, Finance and Administration), Isaac Korir (former Sales and Customer Service Manager) and Diana Olenja (Ag. Corporate Communications Manager) at a Strategic Plan review retreat in Mombasa Serena Beach Hotel on September 19, 2015.

school frequented by children of Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, top civil servants, businessmen and religious leaders from all ethnic and racial backgrounds. He received a British education system which was later infused with the Kenyan curriculum to enable them sit the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). After his CPE, he says their class remained in school for three weeks to prepare and sit for a British based exam which was tougher than CPE.

He later joined Thika High School, which offered the Cambridge education curriculum and a few units on

Kenyan Literature, History and Geography. "There was no cramming and we wrote our own notes and carried out research assignments," says Mwaniki. He says that the notes and assignments were "marked every month and aggregated into the term's performance." Exams were written at end of year.

In school, one had to work hard, play a minimum of three games twice a week, and have two hobbies at any particular time. The same applied to his A-Levels. Their exam certificates at the time read: University Of Cambridge, Local Examinations Syndicate

in collaboration with the East African Examinations Council, and were signed by the Vice Chancellor, University of Cambridge and the Chairman, East Africa Examinations Council (EAEC).

He later joined the University of Dehli, India where he pursued a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and Literature (major) and Political Science (minor) and afterwards, an MA in Literature, but dropped out in May 1982 with a semester to go.

"My sponsorship dried up and I was forced to drop out of the MA class," he



*David Mwaniki (former KLB Assistant Sales & Marketing Manager and Bernard Obura, Sales & Customer Service Manager (right) during the World's Intellectual Property Day celebrations at KICC, Nairobi, on November 1, 2013*

says crediting his five-year international exposure to students from diverse cultures and backgrounds and the Cambridge education for firming up his critical thinking and leadership skills. Mwaniki's most memorable pre-independence events was visiting Ex-Senior Chief Koinange after his release from detention and attending his funeral shortly thereafter. He also remembers Independence Day distinctly. "I was seven when Queen Elizabeth's portrait was replaced with that of Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta on the wall of our living room." "I complained bitterly to my

parents for refusing me to accompany them to Uhuru Gardens on the eve of independence to witness the lowering of the Union Jack and hoisting of the Kenyan flag. The following day, my father bought me a shirt decorated all over with the Kenyan flag, and then took us to local Uhuru celebrations at Kikuyu town. I was not consoled. I had missed the real thing," he says.

A cosmopolitan by any measure, Mwaniki has made friends from countries such as South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Bhutan, Uganda, Angola, Senegal, Palestine, Japan, USA and India.

Mwaniki has some advice for KLB staff. "Thank God for the job you have and work at it to the best of your ability." He also says that competition is stupid. "If you know where you are coming from, where you are now and where you are going, there's no time to check what others are doing. Mind your own business and reach for your destiny," he adds.

Finally, he says, "If in doubt about anything, look for answers in the Bible; it is God's manual for wholesome, wise and successful living."

Mwaniki died on 22 May, 2019 after a short illness.

# Rekindling African Literary Classics

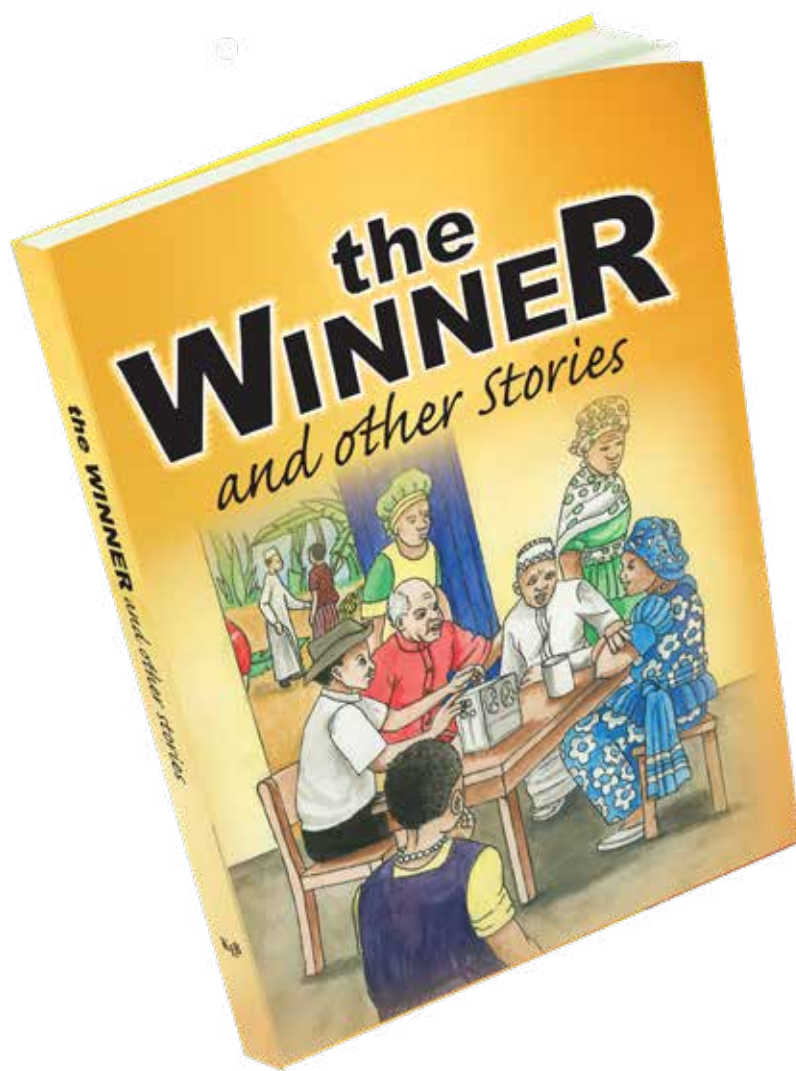
By Moses Murega

In the years gone by, the surest way of knowing when a Kenyan youth did his or her KCSE was by listening to their worldviews in the political, social and historical discourses and the literary text they borrowed from. This was because African writers then not only produced great works of literature that touched readers to their very core but also integrated themes that were understood by readers from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience. Literature created pan-African movements, influenced and engraved convictions in the youths' hearts more than all *Twitter*, *Facebook* and *Instagram* influencers combined. Having done a common literary text in high school was similar to having been in the same class due to a connection that was

built by great works of literature read then. This reminds me of Sir Pelham Wodehouse, words,

“There is no surer foundation for a beautiful friendship than a mutual taste in literature.”

Besides being character shapers, literary writers were indomitable activists through the themes of culture, politics and leadership, property ownership, fight for human rights among others. Themes of friendship and love, hate, death, life, hope and faith also touched upon some of the





readers' most basic emotional responses hence building inherent relations with literary characters and situations decade-to-decade; era-to-era.

Owing to the high quality of the style, characters, story and setting, literary classics of three or four decades ago were animated in readers' hearts making them impossible to forget. Reading '*A Man of the People*', '*Utengano*', '*Things Fall Apart*', '*Aminata*', '*Africa Kills Her Sun*' or '*The Winner*' today (15 years later), I deduce additional layers of truths and appreciate their classic styles and plots much better than the basic understanding of the author's themes I had in high school. The stories are positively relived in me, they communicate fresh ideas and new literary criticism oozes in me. This is what makes a great classical piece of art; appeal, longevity and widespread influence. No wonder, Italian novelist, Italo Calvino, defined a classic as, "A book that has never finished saying what it has to say."

However, it is saddening that

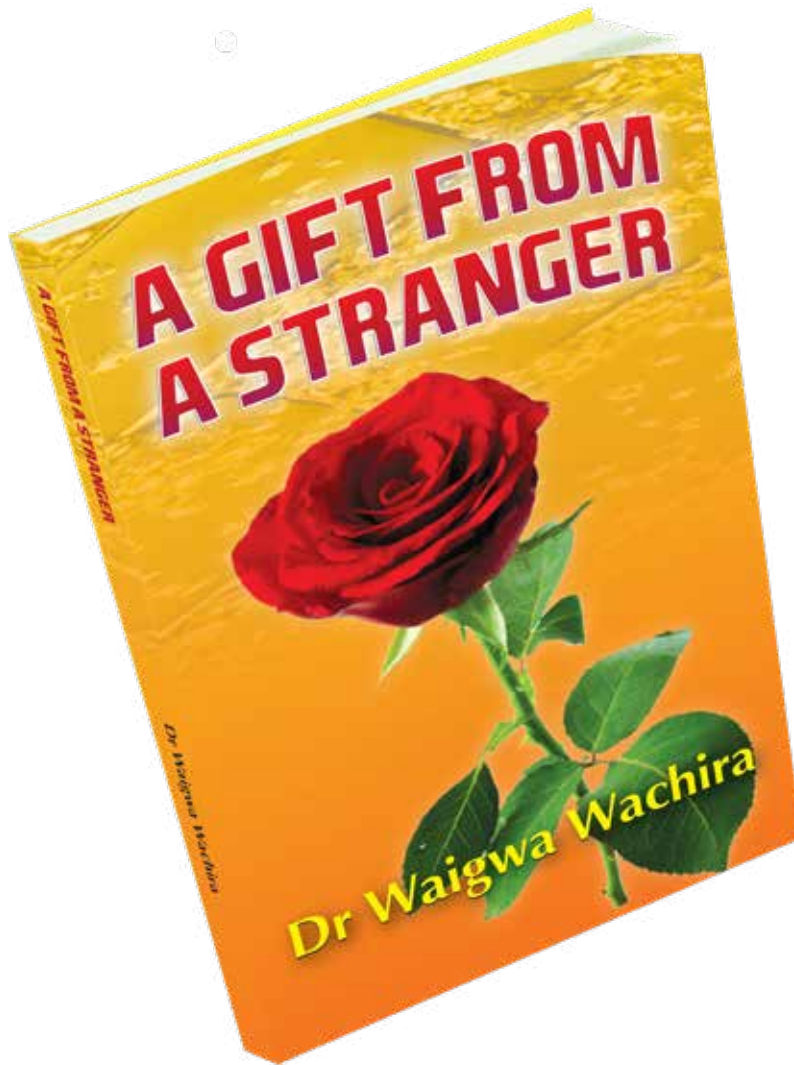
the writers I have so much praises for have long taken repose and there seems to be no replacements that perfectly fit in their shoes. There are no more such prevalently talked about and scholarly critiqued texts as there were three or so decades ago and it is time for the academia, 'friends of literature' and publishers to take action for this and generations to come. Talking of the later, it is time to accept that not everybody can write works of fiction thus we should make our sieves much tighter. Here I am informed by a British author, Catherine Cookson, who once said, "Literature is for everybody, writing is not." Publishers should also sensitize authors to write for the love of the art rather than monetary gains. Money should be a reward rather than the driving force.

Publishers, KLB included, should inspire writers by introducing literary writing competitions in which writers not only compete in producing texts of acclaim and influence but are also given writing lessons

by seasoned authors before they 'go to glory' where their knowledge can benefit no one. Publishers should utilise tested authors in ensuring quality literature, which in business, makes bestsellers remain afloat. In Robert Stevenson's words, "The difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean."

Lastly, publishers should invest in marketing of literary works as much as they do with educational titles. Launching of selected titles can go a long way in sending a word on existence of the title thus creating a market. A good book on the shelves is no classic and can never become one. Cultivating a reading culture should be a central role of publishers for it transmutes to future business. In young readers publishers could do this through mentorship by writers of classics as well as starting functional book clubs in schools, colleges and estates. This will not only create future writers of classic works but also a clientele for them; we create a niche in which we finally reside.

## Book Review



*By Joseph Ndegwa*

**A***Gift from a Stranger* is a play on HIV and AIDS and is written in a sharp satiric tone. The playwright transports the reader on an imaginative journey into the world of the HIV and AIDS catastrophe drawing a direct correlation between HIV and sexual behavior. In the text we see HIV sparing none and afflicting the old, the young, male, female, rich or poor without any discrimination. As a result the characters in this text are types and remain more or less anonymous and are given labels such as Lady

I and Gentleman II to highlight the universality of the problem. It affects all members of the society.

We see characters drinking, and engaging in all sorts of sexual immoralities but sooner than later reality catches up with them and they are not spared. The playwright shows that part of the reason why HIV is a problem in the society is eschewing the teaching of sex education in schools. Most of the characters think HIV is for other people and that they cannot get it. In due course they are proved wrong as they soon get infected. HIV strips most of the characters of their humanity and they begin spreading the virus with utter abandon. At the end of the text the reader realises that behaviour change is a must if one is to avoid contracting the virus. In a sense, therefore, the text provides the much-needed shock therapy that can make people engage in responsible behaviour.

The play makes an outstanding contribution to the application of satire and humour in effecting social change. It is entertaining, and in a sense teaches the reality of HIV and AIDS, which is a serious social problem, laughingly.

We laugh from the beginning of the text to the end. The playwright is able to deal with a sensitive and depressing subject in a light way in order to attract and sustain the attention of the reader up to the end. We laugh uproariously at what is happening in the drama but on reflection, we realise that a significant moral statement about humanity is being made. In a word, the meaning of the text is obtained from the undercurrents of thought that are beneath the humour.

The playwright also seeks to dehumanize the effects of HIV and AIDS. Most of the characters lose their humanity and become psychopaths. As the reader laughs, alarm bells are sent to him or her to remind them that once you make the decision to lead a reckless life, there is no escape and the ugly scourge of HIV roams out there to devour you.

And this is the hard message that the playwright sends to the audience; that there is no middle ground; either you remain on the path of the righteous and escape HIV or indulge in a loose lifestyle at your own peril. The playwright having realised that most texts that deal with HIV shroud the subject

with misery, decides to give us the hard social facts about HIV, which many skirt around and do not talk about. In summary, the text is meant to provide some kind of shock therapy but in an amusing manner.

The playwright has applied Bertolt Brecht's alienation effect to distance the audience from emotional involvement in the play through jolting reminders of the artificiality of the theatrical performance. In the process, readers are able to understand the complex nexus between historical developments and societal relationships.

The play also explores some of the myths surrounding the disease. He shows the absurdity of some of the beliefs such as "being cured of HIV by sleeping with a virgin." Waigwa the satirist is at his best. At the outset of the play, young Kairu is being tormented for "being a virgin" which he denies as asserts that he "has slept with a woman. It turns out that what he means is sharing a bed with Saturday Night Fever. This instance of humour prepares us for the despicable act by Aunt Susan who takes advantage of Kairu's innocence for her sexual

gratification, which in turn draws our attention to child molestation and the foolish assumption that young boys do not have HIV and thus the need to sleep with them thinking they are "safe."

Waigwa uses a number of dramatic techniques that help him to realise the alienation effects which in turn prevents the audience's emotional connection with the drama and, therefore, leaving them room for reflection on the theme of HIV and AIDS and its spread.

At some point, the playwright Waigwa uses hyperbole, a form of extreme exaggeration, in the play to remind us that the events in the play are not real and thus forces us to meditate on the play's message. One such instance is when Kairu says the house in which he slept with a woman had a TV in every room, even in the kitchen." Lady 1's assertion that she met and had a conversation with the devil "on his way to Ngong Forest" introduces magical realism which is meant to curtail our emotional contact with the events in the play.

In certain points in the play the characters directly address the audience. This helps the



audience suspend disbelief and thus remember that what they are watching is a play and not real life. It gives the audience an opportunity to understand the messages being conveyed. For instance, Aunt Susan directly addresses the audience as she takes Kairu to her bedroom. Girl in *Act One, Scene Two* also addresses the audience when she discovers that young girls who get pregnant or get HIV are left to sort out the problem on their own and yet the society does not give them adequate information on sex. The direct address by some of the characters runs throughout the play.

The playwright has also given us situations in the play that transcend the likelihood factor and write as if anything is possible. He gives us absurd propositions that defy reality. He throws dust into our eyes and bewilders us with his brand of reality. He exaggerates situations in an attempt to make them laughable and, therefore, contemptible. These absurd propositions are meant to shock readers, draw their attention and provoke them to think deeply about

the significance of what is said. This also forces the readers/audience to stand above the drama and be objective in judging the characters. It is absurd for Gentleman 2 in *Act One, Scene Three* to argue that if for one to avoid getting HIV and AIDS which is spreading rapidly, all one needs is to “do it fast before HIV catches up” with one. It is also absurd for Gentleman 5 to say the likelihood of an African to get HIV is minimal because it only has a population of 750 million people. The manner in which Gentleman 1 spreads HIV to all the places in Kenya and is seen enjoying it is absolutely absurd.

In the play, Waigwa has used character labels instead of real names except in very rare circumstances. In a sense, therefore, the playwright uses character types to show that HIV spares none. This strategy of naming characters is also meant to make us aware that what we are watching on stage is a play and that the action is not real. This prevents our empathy and enables us to reflect on what is being said about HIV.

The playwright has also infused

humour to good effect. One reads the play laughing uproariously from the first page to the end. Even though the playwright deals with a sad theme in which suffering and death ravage society, the readers laugh even as Waigwa drives his message home. Every time we laugh, we are disconnected from the emotional infrastructure of the play and we are able to reflect on the message.

Also, the Actress who comes at *Scene Five* to sum up the message of the play and also to give us a list of those infected by Gentleman One's sexual escapades. This is also meant to curtail our emotional connection with the play. As she reads the names of “those infected” she also reads some of the names of the actors who played their roles. This is also meant to suspend our disbelief and make us aware that it is just a play acted out by certain actors that we have been watching.

The play is a worthwhile read and basically an unputdownable. It is hilarious and uses satire to enlighten the public about the myths surrounding HIV and AIDS. It is a recommended read for the youth and the not-so young.

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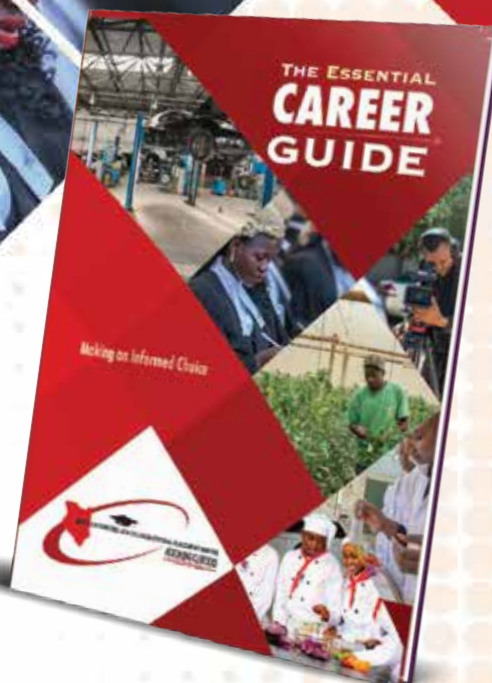
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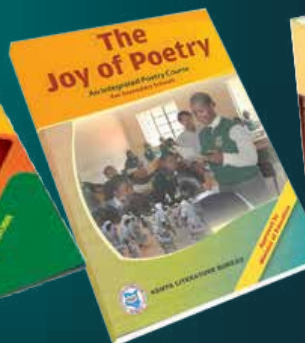
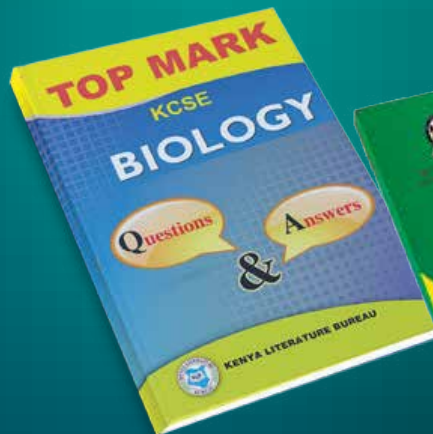


A photograph of three students in a library. Two students in the foreground, a girl and a boy, are wearing school uniforms and are focused on reading or writing in books. A third student is visible in the background, also working. The shelves behind them are filled with books.

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