

GREAT LAKES UNIVERSITY OF KISUMU
TROPICAL INSTITUTE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY NUTRITION



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B13/S_11/14

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DATE: 13th JANUARY 2015

WHY I AM DOING NUTRITION

Earlier, while I was still in my Primary and Secondary schools, I had a dream of becoming a doctor. My parents accorded me all the support they could give in order to help me realize my dream, and my dad was very impressed with me because it was a different profession compared to his, as he is a primary school teacher. Having grown up in the village, I went for my primary school in the village school for eight years and later joined my Secondary School in the year 2005-2008 when I sat for my form four Kenya National Examination Council exams. In the year 2010 (July-Dec), I joined Amagoro Polytechnic where I undertook Computer Packages course and was awarded a certificate. Later in the following year, I was employed on contract in a nearby private school as an untrained teacher. At school, I was selected the Health Club and Sports teacher and hence, I was responsible for all health issues in the school.

It was one moment in the school that there was a break-out of measles among our pupils and being the health club teacher, I had to make sure that all pupils affected are taken

to the hospital and attended to, and this, therefore, still gave me a golden opportunity to fulfill my dream profession, though indirectly.

Apart from that, seminars and programs which were being organized occasionally by the Ministry of Health and the department of Sanitation and Public Health gave me an added advantage to fulfill my dream. This is because I could not miss them since it was under my docket in the school. Some of the activities included: Hand washing, deworming, jigger eradication programmes and many others and this branded me the name 'doctor' and yet I was a mere untrained teacher.

God heard my prayers. One day when I was reading some newspaper dated 23rd March 2012, I came across Great Lakes University of Kisumu advertising intakes of courses. Though I had applied to some courses at the Kenya Medical Training College to undertake either a Clinical Medicine or Nutrition course, I was still waiting for the feedback. Having assessed the qualifications of different courses, I applied for Clinical Medicine, Surgery and Community Health and Community Nutrition, since I had been informed to indicate two different courses. I was later sent an admission letter indicating that I had been selected to join and undertake a Community nutrition course.

In class, we were introduced to the course and I learnt that it entailed a relationship between a good diet and good health. I therefore had several questions as to why there were many cases of the under- five and maternal mortality and morbidity experienced, especially in the rural areas, and more so to some of my community members; small kids with pot-bellied abdomen (distended stomachs) made me think that such kids were healthier than those without. I believed I would be able to get solutions to those questions.

EXPERIENCE

Having worked in the health facility and the community, I identified that the Nutrition department played a vital role in the health of the community members. Malnourished kids who were brought for routine Immunization at the Maternal and Child Health department were referred to the Nutrition department and enrolled to the Outpatient Therapeutic Programme (OTP) and the Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP). Follow-ups were made to avoid relapse due to defaulter cases. I also offered health education services on different occasions on different topics to different patients and clients.

In the community, I carried out community screening especially among the under-fives and pregnant women and referring them to the health facility for enrollment to either the OTP or SFP programmes. I also counseled and encouraged community members to adopt healthy behaviors, a healthy diet and positive ways of living among others. For the inpatient cases, I was able to identify different conditions on different patients and

clients, and which therapeutic food and supplements to be used in each condition.

Through the seminars, outreach activities and conferences organized by my host supervisor, I was able to meet different clients, share with them about their health conditions, counsel and encourage them embrace positive ways of living and inform them of the benefits of their healthy status to their economic activities. I also got an opportunity to go out for supervision of different health facilities on how Nutrition services are offered.

WHAT I INTEND TO DO

I am working hard in my studies to make sure I make a good and competent Clinical Nutritionist or Public Health Officer in order to give light to the communities not yet aware of Nutrition. This will help me to change their general health status and be able to offer consultancy services in my clinic, various organs of the economy in the country, and the outside World.