

Everlyn Lonte – Form 3 11<sup>th</sup> grade BEADS high School

May 2015 – Application for Yale Young African Scholars

#### ESSAY ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE ME ACHIEVE MY DREAMS AND HOPES.

I have always dreamt of having a better tomorrow than today for myself, my family, my country and the world. The main factor that drives me to this is seeing all the problems we are all forced to face.

I am being brought up in Kenya in a typical Maasai home - following the Maasai traditions. I thought it was ironic for my parents to support girl's education unlike the other parents in our culture who had never thought of educating the girl child. Most parents took the life of a girl to be a store for wealth – a dowry of cows when she marries as early as 13 years old. Not knowing what education really was, they thought the Maasai way was best for their children. I saw the suffering my sisters went through to acquire funds for school. Luckily the president in power declared education free through class 8. Having full support from my parents for me to acquire education was now in my hands. But the main problem was now funds since the free education offer only went through class 8. The journey to education was now the rough road in my life. Having in mind that God will intervene one day, I never lost hope. I went along and learnt new things in spite of the environment. The first thing I learnt was to count one to ten. This I did when I was looking after my father's goats. I took advantage counting the small kids as I chased them around the savannah grassland. God saw the suffering I went through and the thirst I had for education. A heaven sent organization came to my rescue and gave me a scholarship for my education. I was so happy about this and took my sisters as my role models. By that time, they had already started harvesting the fruits of their labour. I had an inspiration of being like them or, hopefully, even achieve greater success.

With the scholarship, I have no need to search for school fees. Now it's only my hard work that determines my fate. I am now at a secondary school in grade eleven. I am working hard to make my future fruitful and to have a different and better life than the one I came from. The school offers a quality education which not only equips me with knowledge but also with life skills. I chose this school specifically because of the quality of education which includes critical thinking, extensive reading and writing and an international curriculum that is much broader than the Kenyan government curriculum. The Kenyan curriculum, in addition to a limited curriculum is taught totally through rote memorization. A student is expected to parrot the answer back to the teacher and critical thinking is unheard of.

Most Maasai parents that do support girls' education want their girls to attend the well know Kenyan government schools. They do not understand an international curriculum. My father was definitely of the mind. Although giving an opinion to an elder is unheard of in our culture, I was able to discuss this with my father and explain why an international curriculum was so important for my education. Now, as I begin my third year, he loves my performance.

One of the most important things the school teaches us is choice making. Learning from our own and other people's mistakes is what leads me to making better choices. It is important to realize the consequence of mistakes. My friend is a sad example. She also acquired a scholarship, but she made poor choices of choosing bad friends. She ended up in a bad company which influenced her and ended up losing her scholarship. Worst of all getting pregnant and she is sixteen years old, destitute with no hope for education or a successful future. When I read "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost, it made me think so much about my friend.

Academics is one of the most important tools to success. I am always optimistic and self-driven. I hope that I will someday achieve my hopes and dreams to accomplish my vision to improve the circumstances for my family, community, country and maybe even the world.

#### CONTRIBUTION TO YALE (REGAINING OF OUR ENVIRONMENT)

Growing up in the plains of Kenya has always given me an urge to help bring a difference in our environment. They say climate is the atmospheric condition of a place over a long period of time, but for us this seems to be a myth. Being a livestock keeper, I have had several experiences on famine and drought, which are all driven by environmental changes. I can vividly recall that the source of my passion began when I was once forced to be out of school in class 3 so as to migrate to other lands which were greener. In the green fields I thought of possible solution for this calamity. After the return to our land I reported back to school and the first lesson I learnt, was on Wangare Mathai, the Nobel Prize winner. I was so happy about that and with no hesitation I researched more about her and her contribution to the environment. As a good example I started planting trees on our bare and dusty compound. This could not help solve anything since there was no rain had to think harder than I was, the solution was now to form an environmental club in my school. However this did not work and I thought of facing the community. An elder was never to listen or give heed to a child's words' gained the courage and told them that it was not wise for them to cut the trees, but to plant others to avoid cases of drought and famine. It was not long before the savior of environment passed on. My dreams of someday being like her build up. The only way we can help fight environmental changes is by educating people, and most importantly, taking action.

#### MY PASSION

My passion is to be a teacher. I have the hopes of bringing change to the coming generations and think being a teacher will help me do this best compared to other professions. This will begin by the kind of education I will offer to my students. Currently the present teacher only concentrates on teaching the students based on the curriculum. To my opinion this is not a good thing to any student who is beginning to learn. Education is all about acquiring knowledge and skills, but for our country is more of acquiring knowledge but with no skills. Students are also supposed to be aware of global issues, unfortunately this is not part of the curriculum so they are not taught. My heart is filled with pity every day during then vacations when we sit and discuss with my age mates, and talk about the current issues, and sadly it happens they have got no idea of the global issues. Instead they marvel to me and listen to what I have to say. I believe change starts with me and I am obliged to bring change to the coming generation.

Basing on the community I come from, gender equality is a dead walking dream. Bringing equality to them can be difficult, but trying to fight against early marriage and female genital manipulation will at least help the girl child. Am filled with a lot of pity seeing villagers walking from all corner of the village heading to a homestead where a group of girls are circumcised publicly. One of the memories which left me with a fresh wound is when one girl who was a friend of mine in my age set was circumcised and she bled to death. This memories are still clear in my mind, and they give me an urge of fighting this. After the circumscion ceremony one could now get married to a man of not less than thirty years old. I would also like to impact knowledge to youngsters about the environment conservation believe teaching will be the best a venue to do all this.

#### WHY I WANT TO BECOME A YALE YOUNG AFRICAN SCHOLAR

The reason as why I would like to become a Yale Young African scholar is because I believe in finding solutions this would be a good chance for me to share solutions, which am thinking of with other people as they also share their ideas. This will help build our critical thinking which a very important skill is. It will also help us form a group which will try and innovate something to alleviate the problems. As we come together as people from different countries' we can learn the challenges faced by different people from different countries, and the solution they gave for their problems. With that in hand we get to one major solution to solve problems in our countries.

I hope to improve my leadership skills, critical thinking, problem solving, written and oral communication skills. I believe after joining Yale Young African Scholar will be an answer to a problem.

#### RECOMMENDATION:

The above named person is a student in the third form in Tembea Academy. She joined the school in January 2013.

Evalyne is a girl with an outstanding character. She is one among the best performing student in the class, confident about herself, intellectual and responsible.

Equipped with all this characters she has served as a head girl in the school for two years in a row. Her duties as a leader have been outrageous. She leads with zeal, understanding and upholds all the virtues diligently.

She is not only a performing students in the academic arena but also active in ball games. She is in the school football and volleyball team. – Elizabeth Gathoni Tembea Teacher