

# Scholar Story

## Gloria Omuya



**Gloria Omuya graduated from the University of Edinburgh in 2021 after completing her MSc in Africa and International Development.**

Having come from Kenya a year before with several years' experience working in the non-profit world focused on youth development and education, she won an internship with the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program team at Edinburgh. Following a six-month stint researching alumni engagement amongst African students (including MCF scholars) Gloria moved to the university's Development and Alumni team as Alumni Relations Project Officer.

Gloria's work involves engaging with alumni across the world spanning alumni engagement, student engagement, events management, communications, and research.

"This is completely in line with what I was doing in the education sector - building community and enhancing opportunities for people to succeed - I get to do that now in the higher education sector".

The role provides Gloria with the opportunity to work in a very different type of organisation than her previous roles in Kenya: "I have gained an insight into coordinating things with different people across teams and countries. It is great experience for working in a large organisation." She has used practical experience gained in the role to inform her work as a board member of two non-profit organisations in Kenya, both of which support and nurture young people to fulfil their potential. She has also been able to support her younger siblings through school.

She credits the MCF mentorship initiative, which matched her with a Kenyan alumna during her time as a postgraduate scholar. This was transformational for Gloria. "Everyone who participated loved this mentor program. The mentors were all perfect matches. If ever you are in doubt, having a mentor offers the a chance to listen to someone else who has walked your journey, who offers insights, reflections, and to really help you process where you are in your journey." She modelled the mentorship relationship

she experienced by becoming a mentor herself, as part of the MCF-funded Foundations for All project. Gloria is excited to continue developing the MCF mentorship initiative, and to drive positive student experiences during their time at university: "For alumni engagement, Day One is not when you graduate; it is when you arrive at Edinburgh No one wants to engage as an alumni if they had a bad experience here, so this has to be our starting point."

Before coming to Edinburgh, Gloria's notion of success was different. "I thought to be successful I had to work in on NGO. But now I can see that I can create impact in other ways that weren't in my picture before." Gloria is keen to engage with MCF scholars in the future, and leverage her own experience as a former scholar to support continued engagement between alumni and the University.



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