

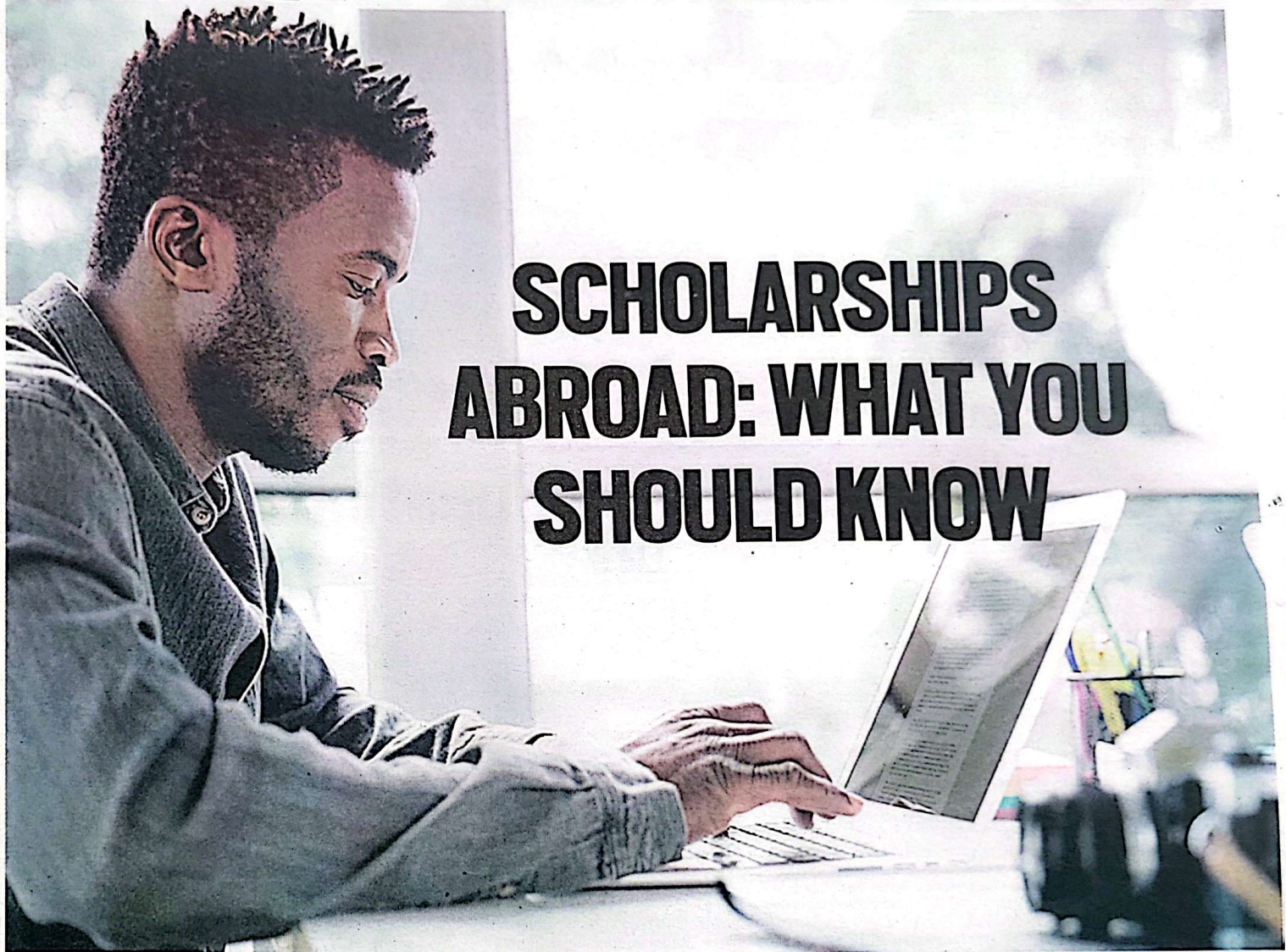


Teaching & Learning

Daily Monitor
MONDAY, JUNE 4, 2018
www.monitor.co.ug

ESSENTIALS OF EDUCATION

22 **PATHFINDER ALPHONSE ACELLAM OJOK** | He abandoned a scholarship to study Engineering in Nairobi for a course in Education, his passion.



SCHOLARSHIPS ABROAD: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

BY ESTHER OLUKA
eoluka@ug.nationmedia.com

It was a dream come true for Shubaya Naggayi Kasule when she secured a scholarship in June 2016 to study a Masters in Psychology at the University of the West of Scotland in the UK. "I was very excited and thanked God, because it was not an easy process," she says.

According to Kasule, scholarship applications have a way of taking one through an emotional roller-coaster

from self-doubt to self-confidence to disappointment. "The wait (for the news on whether one has been either considered or not) is the worst as one undergoes a cycle of anticipation, anxiety and sadness," she says.

It is for such reasons that some people give up along the way and completely discard the whole application process, never to try again.

The process

When applications for the Commonwealth scholarship opened in 2015,

Polly Kamukama, who now holds a Masters in Film Studies from the University of Southampton, UK, says he applied for the 2016/17 intake. Winners of the scholarship are chosen through a rigorous process. The applicants compete locally in their respective countries after which, a small shortlist, usually comprising of three candidates per advertised course is released," he says.

Then, the selected candidates, known as nominees, are required to apply to the Commonwealth

Commission in the UK where they compete with other shortlisted candidates from across the Commonwealth countries.

"At the end of it all, only a tiny fraction of candidates get the scholarship. It is often said the Commonwealth is the most prestigious scholarship scheme in the world but also the hardest to get," says Kamukama.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

INSIDE
HANDS-ON
Schools
emphasising
teaching
of skills. - 20

CAREER: Turn your talent into a career - 19



HIGHER LEARNING

ADAPTING TO SOCIETY'S CHANGING NEEDS

Without a doubt, getting a study scholarship abroad is a life changing opportunity for many students. Despite these programmes coming with a number of rewards, they also have challenges as explained by some beneficiaries below.

...FROM COVER

It was, however, the continuous support from family members and friends that kept instilling confidence and hope in him. After getting considered, Kamukama flew out of the country in September 2016.

Cultural shocks

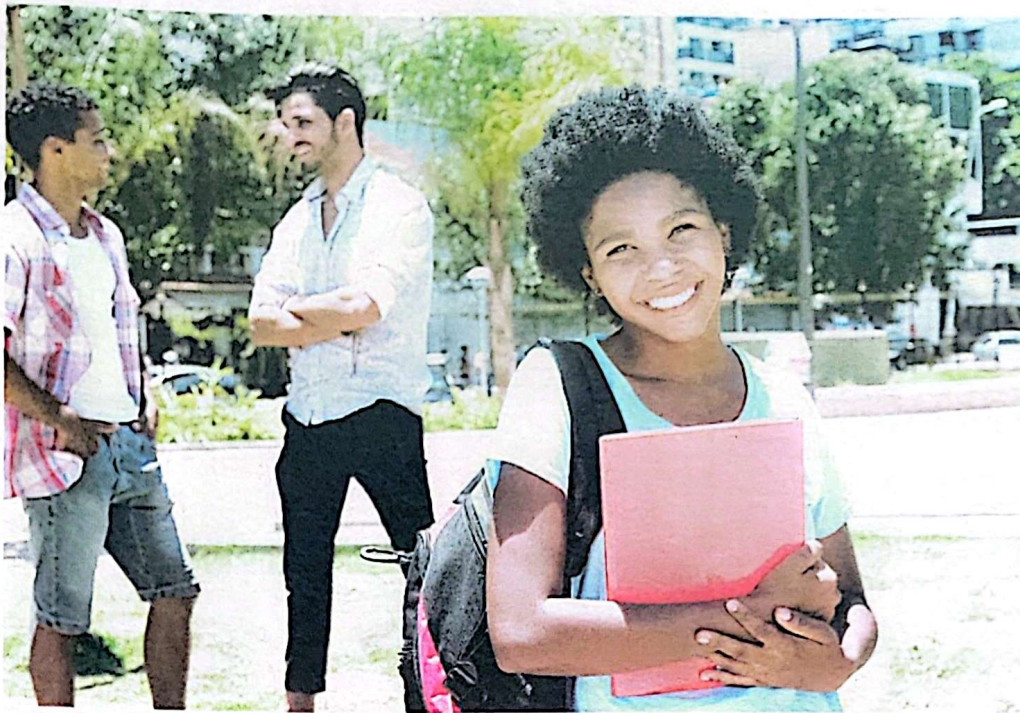
There are a number of challenges scholarship students face abroad. During his studies, Kamukama says, the programme was extremely intense for him. "There was so much to cover, so much research to make and yet in just one year," he says.

As a tactic of securing high grades, Kamukama allocated his time quite well and surrounded himself with supportive people especially his professors until he graduated in December 2017.

For Kasule's case, she faced challenges with the constant assignments and the way lessons were being conducted. "I struggled terribly to get into the culture of reading and researching because their style of teaching was totally different from the Ugandan one," he says, adding, "There was also pressure from back home where people were interested in knowing my next move. Some even advised me not to return to Uganda because the economy was bad."

Kasule persevered until when she graduated in November 2017. Upon her return, she resumed work with her previous employers. Today, she works as a research assistant at Global Health Uganda, a non-profit organisation that focuses on child health, neurodevelopment and interventions research in Uganda.

For Rosalynn Nankya, she got a South Korean government scholarship for the academic year 2012/13 or a Bachelors in Materials Science and Engineering. It was a one year exchange programme at Kangwon Na-



Some people despair during the process of applying for scholarships forgetting the benefits that come with scholarships. NET PHOTOS

VOICES

Catching up



"I struggled to adjust to their way of reading and researching because their style of teaching was totally different from the Ugandan one."

SHUBAYA NAGAYI KASULE, MASTERS IN PSYCHOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST OF SCOTLAND IN THE UK

Language barrier



"Most professors spoke Korean during lectures, although their PowerPoint presentations were in English and the notes were also posted online which was kind of a challenge."

ROSALYNN NANKYA, BACHELORS IN MATERIALS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING FROM SOUTH KOREA

Competitive



"I had a lot of self-doubt knowing that I would perhaps be competing with some of the best brains in the world."

POLLY KAMUKAMA, MASTERS IN FILM STUDIES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON, UK

Securing scholarships abroad; highs and lows

tional University, South Korea. Nankya says on most occasions, the students minded their business.

Although most professors spoke Korean during lectures, Nankya says at least their PowerPoint presentations were in English and the notes were posted online. There was also the compulsory roll-call where professors often called out names of students one by one before lessons started.

Despair

Jimmy Odoki Acellam failed to complete his Bachelors degree in Astrophysics and Computer Science after getting accepted into Keele University, North Staffordshire, UK in 2001.

In the first place, Acellam found it difficult to make friends as many students preferred to mind their own business. Secondly, he found it difficult to easily grasp the lessons.

"Astrophysics was quite tough

as it involved a lot of studying on the universe and celestial objects such as galaxies, stars and planets, among other things," he says.

As he was trying hard to adapt to the new environment and focus on his studies, Acellam was diagnosed with bipolar depression.

"There were times I would get very depressed and on other occasions too excited (manic) to the extent that my behavior was uncontrollable. One day, I even confronted a security guard at campus and was suspended from the university," he says.

With this cocktail of issues, Acellam was left with no choice but cut his studies short and return back home. He missed graduating in 2004.

On a brighter side, studies abroad have a positive impact on students as they get more exposure, expand on their network as well as academic knowledge.

During the application process, Kamukama says he was skeptical about getting the scholarship. "Knowing that I might spend countless hours filling in forms all for nothing dawned on me somehow. There was also that occasional self-doubt knowing that I would perhaps be competing with some of the best brains in the world," he says.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

Prof. John Asibo-Opuoda, the executive director of National Council for Higher Education (NCHHE) says:

- Apply for a course you are passionate about as you will not find that much difficulty during your period of study.

- In case you get a scholarship, crosscheck with the education regulatory body in the country offering the course. This is a way of establishing the authenticity of both the course and the institution.

- It is also important that you make several consultations back home before accepting to enroll for the programme. For instance, talk to your mentors and employer (s) to give you further guidance on your study journey.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE



- Universities are not the only sources where one can seek full or partial financial aid as an international student. Depending on the country you choose for your studies, you may look for assistance through grants awarded by governments or other institutions.

- Do not forget that embassies and local Non-Government Organisations are also a great source of information. For instance, the recipients of Chevening Scholarships and Chevening Fellowships, the UK Government's international

awards programme for postgraduate studies- are personally selected by British embassies around the world.

- There are also a multitude of scholarships with a focus on international and cultural diversity, gender balance, ancestry, and more. Many of the reputable and highly international schools offer financial aid to students coming from different regions and countries.

(WWW.ACCESSMASTERSTOUR.COM)