

Growth Through Learning



Stella Radiates Confidence *by Richard Jenson*



Stella Temu earned a university degree in public administration

At our Tanzania alumnae reunion in July 2017, Stella Temu stood out with her ready smile and eager willingness to engage with GTL board members. Such self-confidence is unusual among young Tanzanian women when conversing with white English-speaking visitors. While it is impossible to say with certainty, Stella's self-esteem has likely been the result of GTL's assistance with her secondary education.

Stella is a member of the Chagga tribe--one of over 100 tribes in Tanzania. She was born in a village near Moshi called Rosho. Her parents had nine children--two boys and seven girls; among the nine, Stella is sixth in her family.

Born in 1990, she received a GTL scholarship to Kibosho Girls

Secondary School outside of Moshi in 2006. English Language was her favorite class at Kibosho, which would be no surprise if you ever spoke with her. Stella finished her A levels at Kibosho in 2012 and went on to the University of Dodoma where she earned a bachelor's degree in Public Administration in 2015. To this point her job search has not been successful. But she has plenty to keep her occupied.

When he died her father left Stella their family farm with its three goats, fifteen chickens and twenty-five pigs. On the day Stella was interviewed at our Tanzania alumnae reunion, one of her sows had given birth to six piglets! Besides the farm in Marangu, Stella has a very cute two-year old son named Abba. Her hands are full.

My Experience with GTL *by Richard Jenson*

I was so taken by a family safari to East Africa in 2000 that two years later, and for five summers, I returned to Arusha, Tanzania.

I brought some older, but functional, computers to a rural village, installed them, and began to teach the teachers how to use them. In that village I was handed a GTL brochure, and in subsequent summers I acted as a GTL scout,

visiting young women whom GTL had sponsored, photographing and interviewing them.



Richard Jenson demonstrating computer use

Reading about or even viewing videos from East Africa fails to do justice to the enormous gap between our existence and theirs. In East Africa, any post-primary education costs more money than some families can afford. For girls whose families cannot afford to send them to high school, a GTL scholarship makes all the difference in the world.

"Investment in girls' education may well be the highest-return investment available in the developing world."

*Lawrence Summers
when he was Chief Economist of the
World Bank*



Viona Lapanunya (on the left)

GTL Scholar Wins International Scholarship

Viona Lapanunya is a GTL scholarship recipient who was recognized as “the best performer” at the Mogotio Girls Secondary School (Kenya) where she attained a high school diploma, with mathematics and physics her favorite subjects.

Having lost her father, she qualified for and won an international scholarship to study electric engineering in Japan through a Japanese NGO, Ashinaga, that supports and educates orphaned students around the world.

Ashinaga assumes all the costs for each scholar, which are estimated at \$100,000 for the entire period. Growth Through Learning is proud and happy for Viona and we wish her all the best.

GTL Visits East African Programs, Summer 2017

This past summer, GTL Executive Director Wanjiku Mwangi led three board members and volunteer Lisa Gurland on GTL’s biennial trip to Kenya and Tanzania to catch up with current GTL scholars, alumnae, and coordinators.

After meeting with the five in-country coordinators, we spent a day with 10 GTL alumnae in Tanzania. Most had just recently finished their post-secondary education and were beginning job searches. Others were working and starting families. Talking with them helped us better understand the challenges of looking for work in a country with 10% unemployment. Mercy Kinyodah, GTL’s social media coordinator, worked with the alumnae to set up a GTL alumnae network based on WhatsApp, to exchange advice, support, and connections with each other.

We also visited current GTL scholars in schools in Central and Western Kenya, and in the Rift Valley. A highlight of the trip was visiting Mogotio Girls School in Rift Valley. With the help of Caroline Lentupuru, GTL Coordinator in Rift Valley GTL scholar, Viona Lenapunya, from Mogotio received a four-year scholarship to university in Japan.

The impact of this scholarship has hit home, not just for Viona but also for her school and community, as we witnessed on our visit. Teresa Sogomo, principal of Mogotio School, held a party for us in honor of this scholarship. Ms. Sogomo raised funds from her community to come to Massachusetts and personally thank GTL donors at our 20th anniversary fundraising gala. It was humbling to once again be reminded of how important education is to the girls we support.



GTL Board members and friends visiting the Segga Girls School in Western Kenya, Summer 2017

Celebrating 20 Years of Support for Girl's Education



Dancing to the rhythms of the Mood Sings Orchestra

On October 14, 2017 more than 130 friends of GTL gathered to celebrate 20 years of providing high school scholarships by dancing to the big band sounds of the Mood Sings Orchestra. The highlight of the evening was hearing from three special speakers. GTL Executive Director Wanjiku Mwangi, shared the story of her mother, who never went to high school but who often said that

if she had, she would have become an airplane pilot. Despite growing up in a small village, her mother made sure that Wanjiku and all her siblings attended high school.

Teresa Sogomo, principal of Mogotio Girls Boarding School in the Rift Valley of Kenya, also spoke. Ms. Sogomo raised the funds from her community so that she could come

to the celebration to personally thank GTL donors for supporting girls' education in East Africa. Her heartfelt words were moving and ended with a call to action, asking us to continue our support.

Harriet Kariuki, the GTL alumna who graduated from Harvard and received a fellowship to study Sino-African at Peking University, also came from Kenya to join us for the evening. Harriet is a true example of our motto, "Invest in a girl, she will do

the rest." Harriet spoke about being sent home from school because her parents, who never went to high school themselves, couldn't afford her school fees despite their hard work as tea farmers. For Harriet, a GTL scholarship came through just in time for her to take national exams; she scored number one in the nation! Harriet told us that if she had not received the scholarship and been able to finish high school, it is likely that she would have ended up pregnant and/or on drugs, as is the case for too many of her village friends.

Over and over, GTL scholars have shown us how they match your generosity with hard work, perseverance, and the courage to move forward into a world most of their families couldn't even imagine. Growing up, Harriet never knew someone who went to college. Now, when she is back in Kenya, she makes sure to visit schools and tell students about the opportunities that await them if they can manage to stay in school. She offers herself as an example.



Teresa Sogomo, Principal of Mogotio Girls Boarding School in the Rift Valley, Kenya



Harriet Kariuki has received a fellowship for graduate work in Sino-African relations



President's Letter

This 20th anniversary year has been an exciting one for GTL and for me personally. I visited Tanzania and Kenya in June to meet alumnae in Tanzania and visit current GTL scholars and the schools they attend in Kenya. The visit affirmed my conviction that the coordinators are selecting ideal scholars for our programs.

Art Fitzgerald, GTL Vice-President, has been skillfully leading the GTL board in planning strategy for the next 3-5 years. Our strategic plan is to grow our funding base to provide more scholarships and expand the benefits of a high school education to more girls.

Donna Lazorik

Last month, we received an anonymous donation and pledge from a first-time donor for \$15,000 a year for four years, enough to support 18-20 girls through four years of high school.

In October, we celebrated together with GTL friends, new and old, including two special visitors from Kenya. You can read all about the gala fundraiser elsewhere in this newsletter.

We look forward to working with you as we move into our next 20 years. To learn more about our activities or become more involved, please contact me at dl@pobox.com.

Sincerely, Donna Lazorik
President, Growth Through Learning

Insight into the Late Roger L. Whiting, GTL Founder

Growth Through Learning was founded in 1997 by Roger Whiting from Holden Massachusetts. Roger's cousins Ann Kynast Maddox, David Kynast Gordon and Nancy Gordon remember him as energetic and describe him as "the comedic leader of our escapades."



*The late Roger L.
Whiting.*

Cousin David remembers Roger sharing his deep knowledge of the woods and his passion for creating. And he remembers that Roger was always ready to help those in need. When Roger caught fire about girls' education in East Africa, and founded Growth Through Learning, they recognized that he had found his true vocation. The name of the organization reflects his own life experience.

"Our entrepreneurial grandfather would have applauded the GTL organization. Our grandmother and aunt would have been happy that so many girls have been helped. Our parents would have delighted in Roger's finding a wonderful vocation. And we cousins stand a bit in awe. We are grateful for the chance that Roger's organization gives us to broaden our support to the global level, helping girls in East Africa in their quest for learning."

How you can help Growth Through Learning

DONATE at: www.growththroughlearning.org

- \$350 supports a girl for half of an academic year
- \$700 supports her for a full year
- Donate an amount that is right for you
- Volunteer with Growth Through Learning - contact Wanjiku Mwangi, Executive Director at execdir@growththroughlearning.org to learn more
- Visit us on Facebook, www.facebook.com/growththroughlearning and, if you like what you see, share it with your friends



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